

October 2020

Issue 31

THE SPECTRUM SHOW

Magazine

KEYWORDS

GOOD IDEA OR EPIC FAIL

ADVENTURON

MAKE YOUR OWN ADVENTURES

GENIUS MOUSE REVIEWED

PLUS:

SPECTRUM KIDS
ECHO KEYBOARD
AND MORE...



Includes material not in
the show



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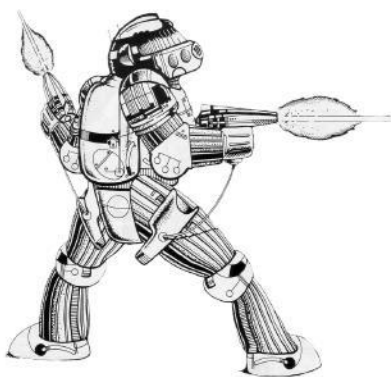
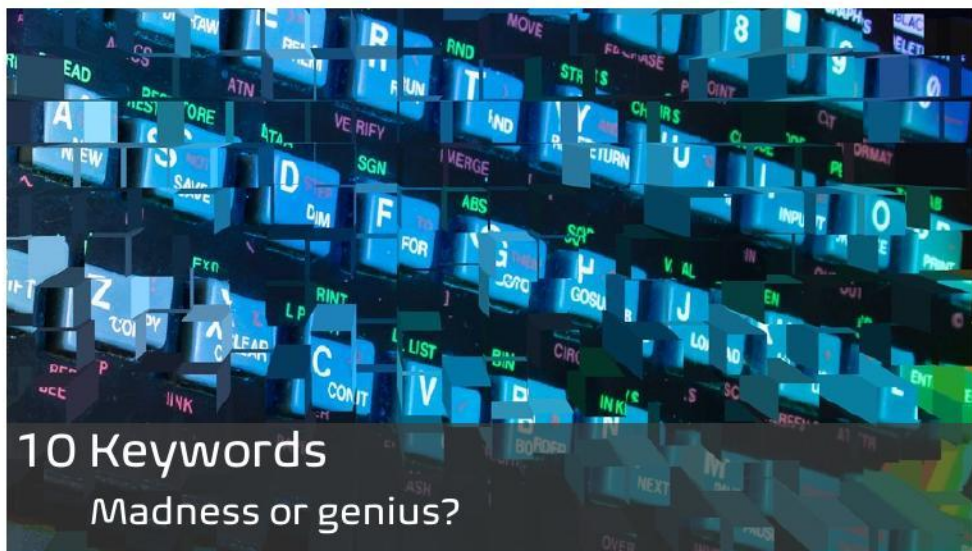
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EDITORIAL



Welcome to issue 31 of The Spectrum Show Magazine. Thank you for downloading and reading.

The ups and downs of this crazy hobby never fail to surprise me. One minute you can be basking in the glory of a new piece of hardware, lovingly re-built back to its former glory, the next, despondent that another piece of hardware just fell apart in your hands.

One day you think you really should put some effort in and get a new game released, the next you find a few 80% complete games and one 100% complete game update sat on your hard drive.. I will take some time to try and complete these as it's been a while since I released anything.

The constant release of new games though is very uplifting. It's great to see new ideas and new people having a go and putting something back into the community.

House Move Find

Yes, I am still going on about the house move, and that's because as I empty more boxes, I find more things. A recent expedition through my old photograph negatives brought to light some nice examples of my younger days and computers I owned at that time. Some are embarrassing - see the one I posted on Twitter not so long ago, some are interesting to me because I do not remember having the picture taken. I will be doing a Patreon video about these shortly.

Patreon has some really nice videos on there with behind the scenes material and additional reviews and random Spectrum goodness. After each show I release 'The Post Show' that features un-used footage, comments on the episode and behind the scenes footage. If you are interested in seeing this, hop on over to Patreon.

Old Tapes

Amongst the paper, photographs and books I also discovered a Spectrum tape with the word 'GAMES' written on it. This was a mystery, as all my BASIC games from the 80's are safe in my large plastic brief case.

Sadly, when checked, it turned out to be back-ups of those games.

However, at the same time, a friend was cleaning out his attic and found a collection of five blank tapes. He knew these to be his old Spectrum tapes, but could no longer access them because he didn't have the required hardware.



Posted to myself with the guarantee I would not show anything dodgy on the show, I set about checking out the contents. The results of this escapade are to be found on Patreon and possibly a future show.

Instagram

I have, as some of you may know, setup an Instagram account. This will feature original photographs of all things Spectrum, and be added to on a regular basis.

During the making of any show I take a lot of photographs, and only use a small selection of them. This gives me a chance to share some of them with you.

The cover image, incidentally, the first cover of this magazine to feature a Spectrum, was one such shot. I wanted to do some pictures with red, green and blue lighting and I took a few of different bits of hardware and different angles etc.



If you enjoy looking at Spectrum stuff, check out my Instagram page (ZXSPECTRUMPAUL).

Adventures

It seems this last few months there have been a lot of chat about adventure games one way or another. You will see a really nice piece on pages 24 to 29 about Adventuron. A web-based tool that allows you to create adventure (text or text and graphics) games for the ZX Spectrum and the Spectrum Next. There are online tutorials and the results can be fantastic, just check out Rite Of The Druid on the Next.

The Next has been getting it's fair share of adventures too, the main ones being conversions of the old Magnetic Scrolls games.

Playing these on the Next is fabulous and the graphics have been ported across really well. If you like adventure games and have a Next, you probably already know about these.

Welcome

I would like to welcome and thank three new contributors to this issue. Lee Price, Graeme Mason and Chris Ainsley have done their bit and sent in reviews and articles. It makes it much more interesting to have a mixture of writers.

I hope their work inspires others to join in and send in reviews or articles to be included.



ULTIMATE ULTIMATE

Ultimate Play The Game have announced they plan to release a massive collection of their games in one mega pack. Called the Collected Works, the compilation will include Jetpac, Psst, Atic Atac, Lunar Jetman, Cookie, Tranz-Am, Knightlore, Alien 8, Nightshade, Gunflight and Sabre Wulf. This will be a great bundle for anyone coming to the Spectrum late or people who just want most of the Ultimate games in one package.

The obvious missing title seems to be Underworld, but there has been no comment made by Ultimate about this.

The pack will be available in early August and sell for 12.99 on tape and 14.99 on disc.



PIRANHA SINKS

The budget label Piranha has been closed down due to insufficient turnover. Originally launched in 1986, the company released games like Trap Door, Strike Force Cobra and Yogi Bear, all of which have now been bought by Alternative Software, along with the rest of the Piranha back catalogue.



ELITE BATTLE

It seems Elite are in a spot of trouble with its new game Overlander.

US GOLD have made threats because they believe it is a blatant plagiarism of the Atari arcade game, Road Blasters, to which they have the rights. They have further said that the major distribution companies, Microdealer, Leisuresoft and Centresoft, that form part of US GOLD would not distribute it.



Steve Wilcox of Elite is denying any wrong-doing, claiming it is an original game. US Gold are also threatening Titus, for its game Fire and Forget, claiming similar resemblances.

RUMOUR +4

There are still rumours of the next Spectrum to be released, fondly called the +4. Although there is no hard evidence of the machine actually been planned, some pundits claim it will have a Z80H processor, running faster than the one in the other models, a pixel resolution of 320 x 200 with no colour clash, and sound to rival the Amiga.

Some people even say it will be released in late summer, but users will just have to wait and see.

CRL TROUBLE

CRL are in big trouble. After an argument with its distributor Electronic Arts earlier in the year things have not gone well and they have now laid off all of their programmers.

CRL claim that a failed partnership with Electronics Arts saw them pull out of a major distribution deal leaving CRL with a massive debt of £204,000.

Electronic Arts have said they pulled out because the games CRL were looking to publish at full price were, quote: "Little better than budget products."

In an attempt to save CRL, they have applied for an administrative order, which would hold off any creditors for 3 months, but now they are in a legal battle with Electronic Arts over this whole fiasco.

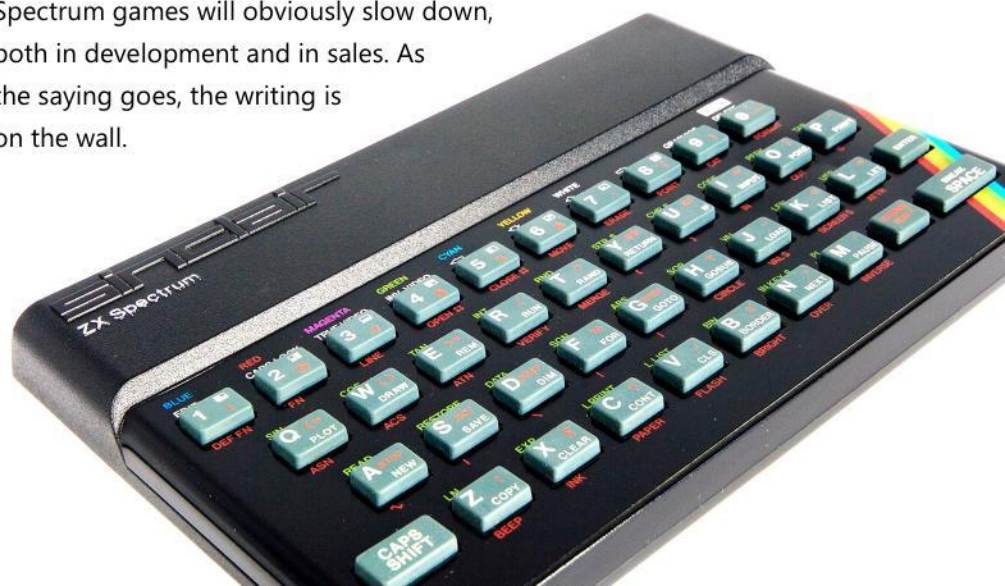
The Spectrum Show

SPECTRUM SLOWS

Sales of Spectrum games are in decline, according to a new Gallup report, down to their lowest since December 1987 with just 41% of the market.

The Commodore 64 shows slight improvement, up to 23% with the Amiga and Atari jointly accounting for 22%.

As the new 16bit machines become more popular, Spectrum games will obviously slow down, both in development and in sales. As the saying goes, the writing is on the wall.



sinclair special

5



*Inside...
New Interface 2
and ROM cartridges!
New Software!*

Frank Bruno BOXING

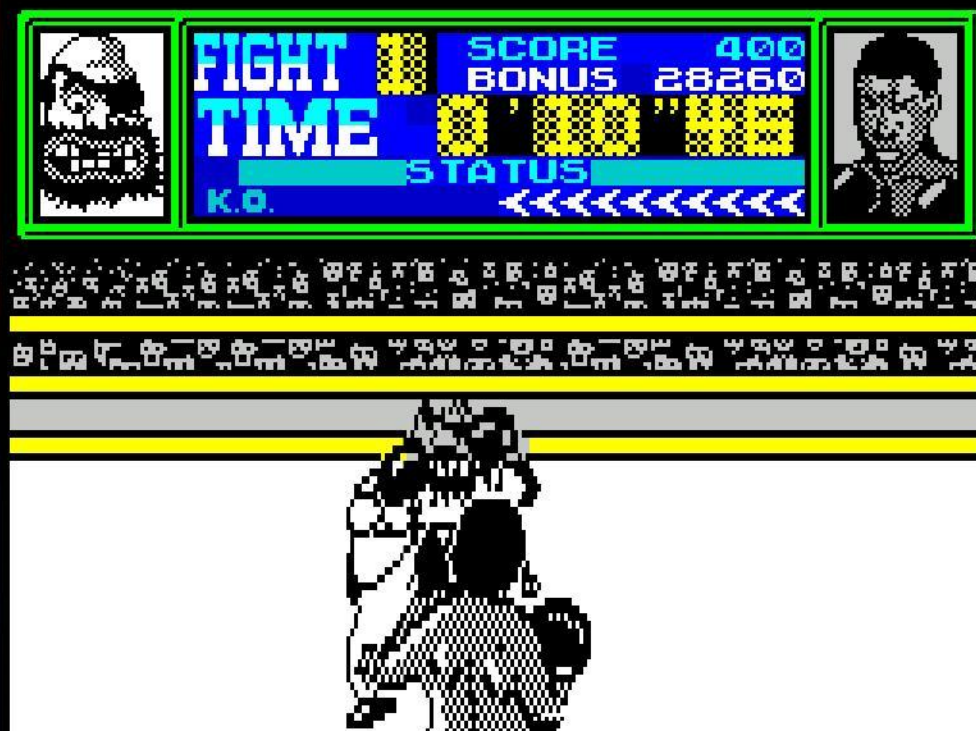
Elite Systems 1985

In 1984 a new type of arcade game appeared in the seaside resorts up and down the country. It wasn't a shoot-em-up, it wasn't a sports game and it wasn't a platform game, it was a boxing game.

Super Punch-Out had you controlling a wire frame boxer, throwing punches and dodging your opponents attacks to try and win the title.

Home computer and console versions soon began to show up and in 1985, Elite Systems, in their usual underhand way, released an unlicensed version.

Their game though featured a famous UK boxer called Frank Bruno, who rose to fame throughout the 80's, eventually winning the heavy weight championship in 1995, shortly before retiring.



Frank Bruno's Boxing featured 8 opponents to beat, all with silly names and characters. The inlay showed images of them along with biographies, all trying to be funny, and failing. The images looked almost identical to the arcade challengers too, so Elite did little to hide the fact they were stealing the graphics. The first opponent, The Canadian Crusher was obviously the arcade's Bear Hugger.

The controls had you ducking left and right, delivering body shots and head shots and moving left and right. With so many controls, the game could get frantic, especially if you landed with a few good blows, and went in for the killer punch.

Frank and the opponent both had knockout meters, and as each landed punch, one segment would light up. Once the meter was full, the next good punch would knock down either Frank or the opponent.

When down, they usually get back up, and you just have to keep on plodding away, hoping to get lucky.

If you beat the first opponent the second, Fling Long Chop arrives, and it all starts again. Each opponent has their own signature move and strangely, Fling Long Chop has a sweeping kick, which is obviously illegal in boxing.

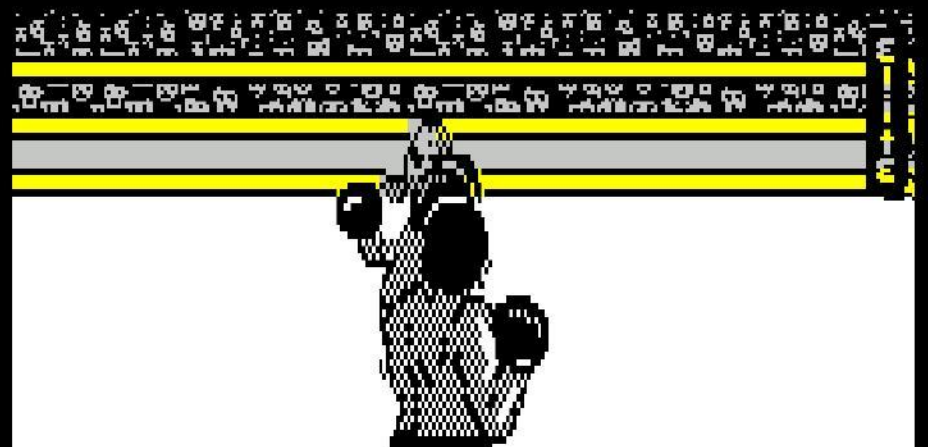
You have to identify when each of these special moves is coming and either move or duck out of the way.

The graphics are very good, Frank is drawn in solid shades with the opponents in sort of wire frame, but with plenty of detail. The movement is not so smooth, with punches just happening rather than having fluid movement, but this helps keep the speed up.

Sound is used well with a few spot effects for punches, counts and wins.

It is not an easy game to progress in, but it's fun to have a go. I found it a bit monotonous, having to go through the same actions over and over again, and when the opponents hit you out of the blue, it can get frustrating.

An interesting end to the game advertises a data disk with new opponents, and Scooby Doo, both of which never materialised. The data disk never arrived at all, and Scooby Doo was shelved and re-written as a poor platform game.



Compare

Super Punch Out

The arcade version obviously has more colour, larger graphics, better animation and better sound.

It also had dual screens with boxer details and KO meters placed on the top one.



LOS ANGELES

Entertainment USA 1987

SWAT

Los Angeles is experiencing a problem with terrorist gangs holding several people hostage. Can you rescue them?

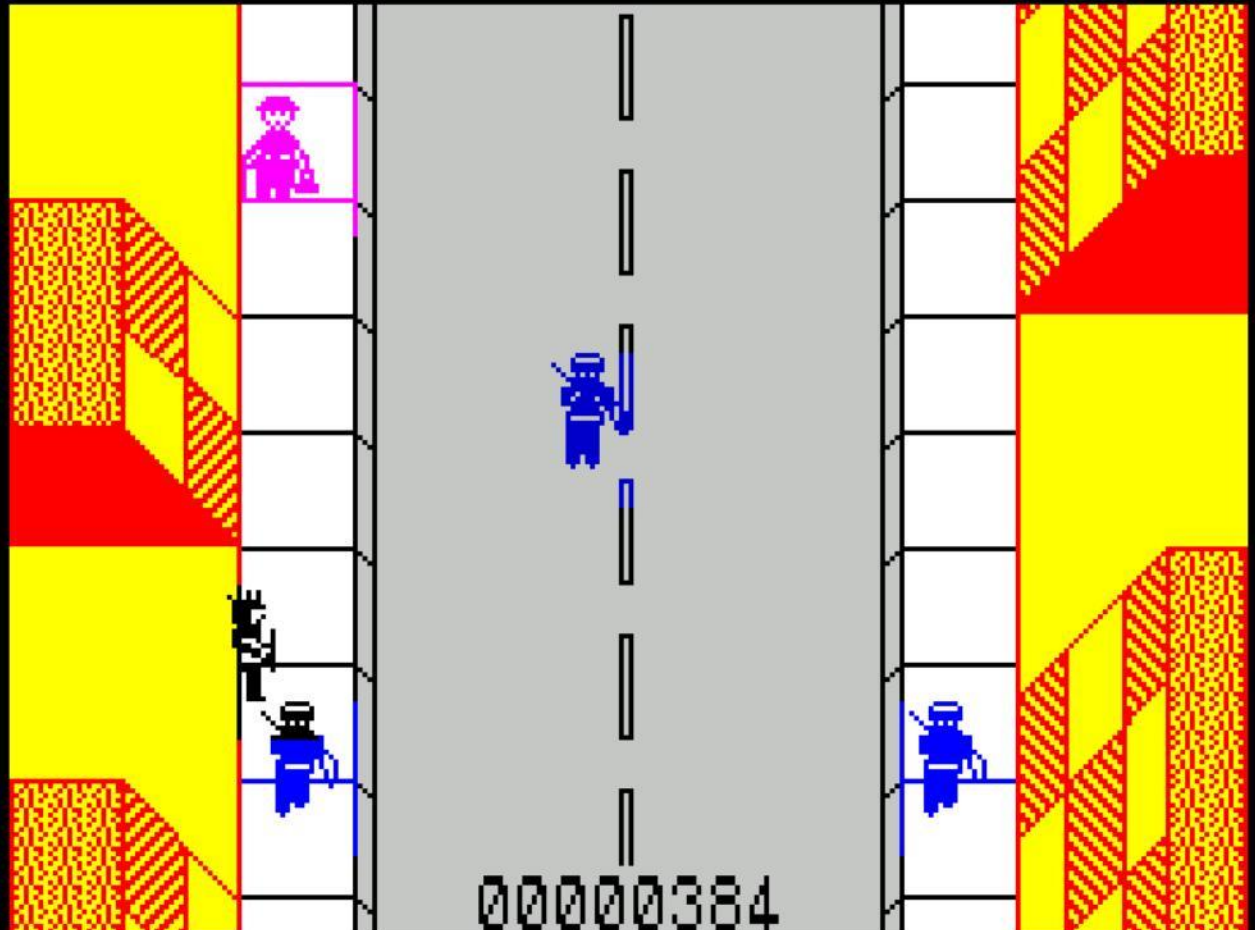
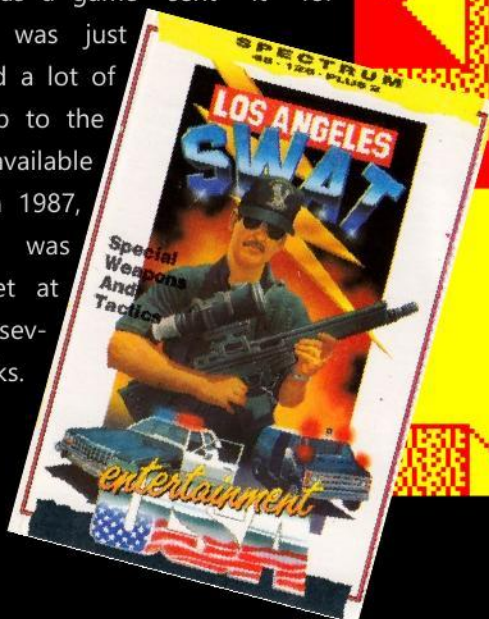
Well this is a Commando/Ikari Warriors clone that manages to miss the mark entirely by not grasping what made those two games so much fun that is their rapid run and gun nature. That aspect is sorely missing here as every time you shoot, your character is unable to move although he can spin round on the spot rather rapidly!

As you slowly make your way up the screen through the streets of Los Angeles you will encounter the gang members as well as people wandering down the street carrying their shopping. Quite why anyone would be shopping in the middle of what can only be described as a war zone is open for a lively debate.

The general presentation of the game is very poor, to be frank, from the very basic menu which is just control selection option through to the rather poorly defined and animated sprites in game. There is no music which considering the 128k machines were now readily available is quite a poor showing and the actual sound effects seem to be just beeper noises. It seems to be a 48k game that has simply been released way to late in the life cycle of the ZX Spectrum.

The game has a very amateur feel to it and it does come across as a game sent it for consideration that was just published. It needed a lot of work to bring it up to the standard of games available on the spectrum in 1987, commando itself was available on budget at this time as well as several compilation packs.

Review by Lee Price



3D SEIDDAB ATTACK

Hewson Consultants 1984

You are the commander of a modern tank or "drone". Your task is to patrol the city streets, destroying any Seiddabs that venture within your range. You are armed with steerable surface to air missiles.

That is the extent of the story for this rather impressive 16K game. The visuals are quite unique and work really well, giving a great feeling of moving through eerie city streets of the future.

You have a short range scanner to help navigate the streets and the top part of the screen displays the view from your drone. You continually move forward with only having to control of up, down left and right.

Clearing the first map then plunges you into the countryside and more shooting, if you can get that far. This is not an easy game.

The graphics are very nice, with a good feeling of flying. They are smooth and work really well. The map is easy to follow with your drone being the flashing dot and the enemies being the solid dots.

Sound is good with a continuous clicking for your engines and various effects for firing and explosions.

Control is easy, and the game is really well done.

If this kind of thing interests you, give this one a go.





KEYWORDS

GENIUS IDEA OR HUGE MISTAKE?

Sinclair's idea of multi-function keys, shift keys and extended mode may have confused the beginner, but was this system an aid to programming and learning and did it really speed up typing in listings? - the jury is out!

Modern computers have a variety of different keyboards, but they all work in the exact same way. You type what you want, letter by letter. Yes, you can create keyboard macros, but for the average users, it's still one letter at a time. The more you practice, the more proficient you become, with professional typists able to produce 100 words per minute without even looking at the keyboard.

Even when you delve into programming languages, the story is the same, functions, commands and labels are all entered letter by letter.

Most home computers opted for this approach too. The Commodore Vic 20, C64, Atari 400, 800 and beyond. The Apple II and future Macs were no different and even early machines like the Oric, Jupiter Ace, Dragon 32 and Aquarius were all single key inputs, although the Vic 20 did have graphic characters as optional keystrokes.

The only other computers I could find that came close was the TRS80, but only one model, and the Thompson M05 and M05e.

Sinclair introduced Keywords onto the public on the Sinclair Z80. This trend continued through the ZX81 and ZX Spectrum. This mix of

shifted and extended mode options was meant to make programming easy and fast for the non-technical. The Spectrum has up to four uses per key, which at first can be confusing, but they are helpfully colour coded. A great idea from the designers but can't remember struggling to get that all important maths function and hitting everything else but the one you need?

For those new to this system, or those who simply want to remember fondly how Sinclair tried to change programming forever, here is a brief explanation.



The word in white is the main keyword, in the case of the diagram, BORDER., Pressing this key in direct mode, after a colon or at the start of a programming line will produce that word. Thereafter the letter B will produced. Therefore pressing the key twice will produce BORDER B. For example;

```
10 BORDER 0
20 BEEP 1,1: BORDER 3
```

The symbols and words in red on the key tops can be accessed by holding down Symbol Shift while pressing the key. In the case of the B key, this symbol is the asterisk.

The words in green above the keys (in our example BIN) are accessed by going into extended mode. To do this you hold Caps Shift and press Symbol Shift – the cursor will turn into a flashing letter E – pressing the key now will now give you this green word.

All very confusing at first and many first time users just could not get the hang of it. The rubber keyed Spectrum, for me, looked really cool because of this splash of colours across its keys though, but when you started using it, things often did not go as planned, and you could usually type the full word faster than you could find the key combination to get the desired result, especially rarely used ones like ABS or SIN.

The more you used it though, the more you remembered where the words were and how to get them. Using emulation on a PC keyboard makes it almost impossible to write BASIC code – you can use the helpers to be found in some emulators, but it's still a pain because there is not the instant reference to look down on. If you want to write BASIC in emulation, I would suggest something like BASIN. This program lets you type code the usual way, letter by letter, and then converts it into a file ready to load into your emulator of choice.

As you became more proficient, it seemed Sir Clive was right, it was faster and more convenient to write BASIC code using this weird system. Game listings were a breeze. The rubber keys were easy to hit due to the spacing, but then Sinclair changed things.

The Spectrum Plus was released in 1984 and the keyboard became harder to use in that way. Not only had the colour coding of the commands gone, now they were all in white, but also the keys were closer together. Sometimes you could press two at once by accident and the whole process became clunky and almost unusable. The keyboard itself was better in some aspects, but access those keywords became problematic.



A black and white world for the new Spectrum Plus.

When the 128k arrived not much changed but Sinclair introduced 128k BASIC. Here you could enter the code letter by letter like all the other micros. Coming from the 48k model, I found this slow, and error prone. Because it retained the Plus style keyboard, the keywords were still present should you want to use them.

The Plus2 improved the keyboard greatly, but Amstrad removed the keywords leaving only LOAD, CODE and RUN so programming in 48k mode was impossible for newcomers. What were they thinking? Maybe trying to remove the familiar Sinclair branding or trying to make the machine look more professional? Whatever the reason, the Spectrum's identity was slowly being eroded. The Plus 3 continued this, slowly erasing the keyword system from history.



Not many keywords survived Amstrad's take over

Today I can still remember many of the keyword placements, especially the common ones like THEN, or INKEY\$, but still find myself struggling when the less used words pop up in a listings. For me, it was a good invention. A good way to entice people in and a good way to make sure what you typed was correct. It also meant, possibly, less reliance on syntax checking in the ROM and maybe less space if each keyboard had its own token. I am not that technical so I'm guessing at this bit, but logically that would seem the most efficient way to do things.

I liked the keywords. They looked great on the keyboard giving the Spectrum a unique look. They worked well once you knew how to get them, and they did speed up programming once you got used to them.

Today they would not be welcomed though. Modern languages and environments are just not suited to this kind of input, so for those of us who enjoyed this little bit of computing history it's a nice memory to have and to enjoy when you encounter them again in later life.



BARMY BURGERS

Blaby Computer Games 1983



Back in the 80's, the arcades were full of alien shooters and platform games but every now and then a new game came along.

Burger Time, although not being a million miles from a platform game, had sufficient differences to make it worth a second look.

There were very few versions of this game for the Spectrum, the only other notable release was Mr Wimpy by Ocean.

Barmy Burgers follows the arcade version closely and looks very similar. The idea is to move across the various parts of the burger and as you do they drop down. Once the burgers are all complete at the bottom of the screen the level is complete.

In your way are various food nasties including a sausage and an egg. You can use pepper to stop them but this doesn't last long and isn't permanent.

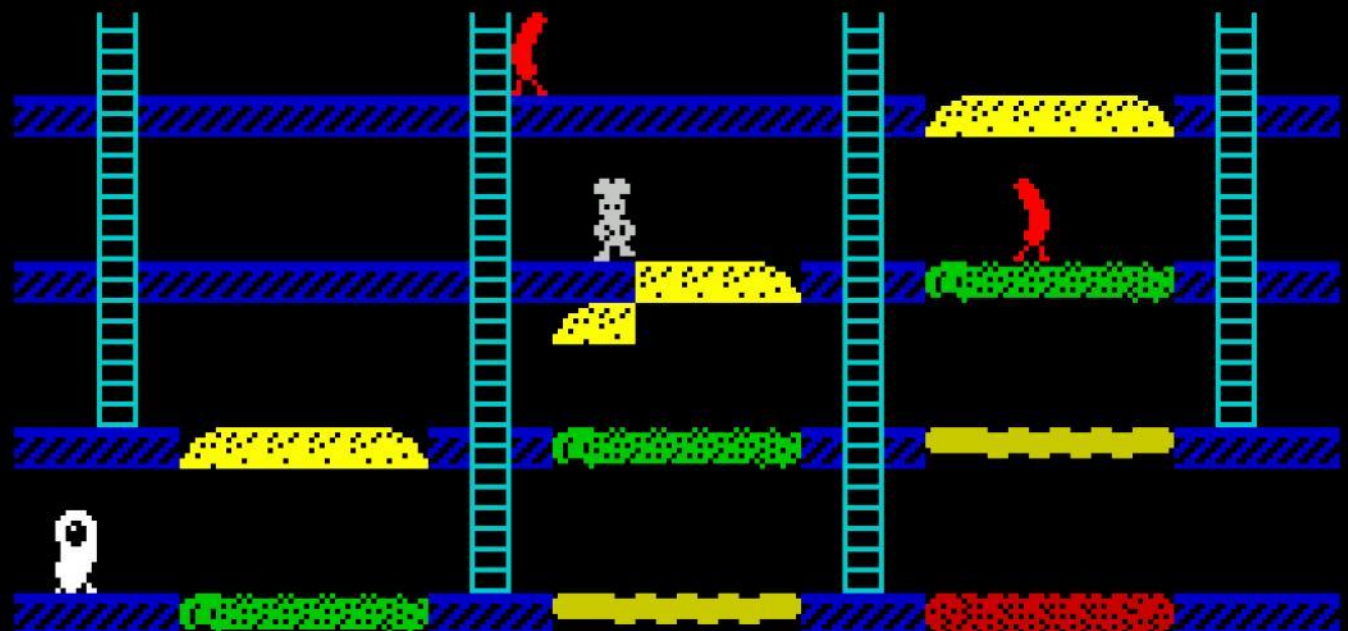
The dropping burger parts can also be used to kill the nasties if timed right, but they soon re-appear.

The graphics are close to the arcade, obviously with the limits of Spectrum, but look really nice.

Sound is used well with various effects for the burger parts falling and pepper.

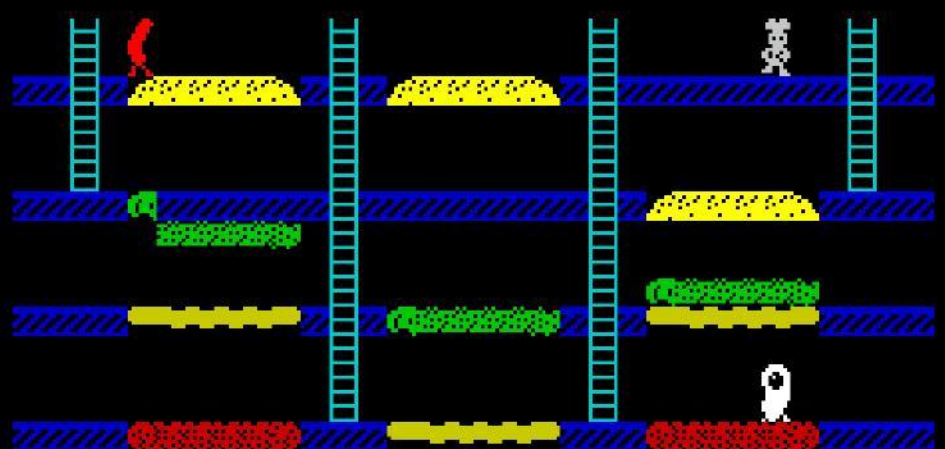
Control can be a bit sticky, which is shame, and the game pauses as the burger part drop, which sort of disrupts gameplay a bit.

With only Mr Wimpy as a contender, this is a brave attempt by Blaby, and the end result is a playable game. However, as an early release, it



does suffer in a few areas and could have been so much better had it been written later, when the spectrum had been ripped apart and new tricks learnt.

Not bad then, if you like the arcade version but does suffer from early game syndrome.





Retro Souls 2018



Old Tower is an excellent puzzle game with unique movement that challenges the way you think about completing the numerous levels.

The idea is simple, collect all the items and end at the finish point. However, it's not that simple because of the way the character moves.

Before the game though we are treated to some nice music and a brilliant loading screen.

Into the game then and the playing area is built to resemble a tower, which also limits the playing area to the centre third vertically.

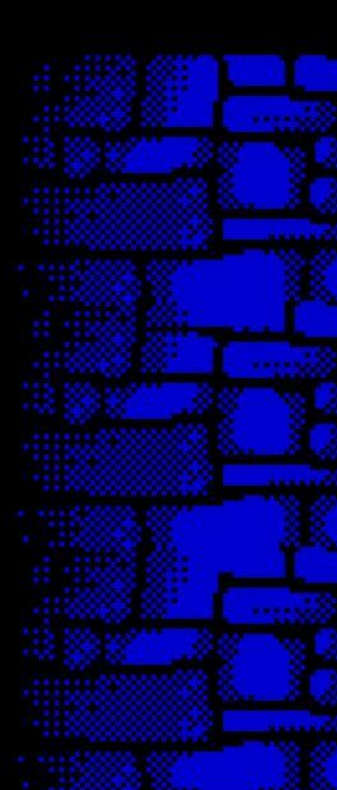
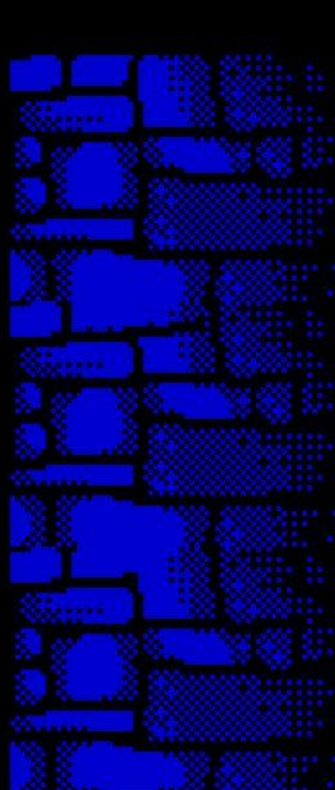
Above the main character are a series of walls and floors patrolled by various creatures. Around these are placed yellow dots and spinning coins.

Once the character sets off in a direction, he keeps going until he hits something, this means you have to work out the route carefully, and this is where the challenge comes in.

The graphics are brilliant, very colourful and the scrolling play area is great, and adds that extra something. The game uses a multicolour engine to add extra colours, and this looks amazing.

There is music playing through out which really helps the game along.

As the levels progress extra things get added such as enemies to avoid and bricks that only appear if

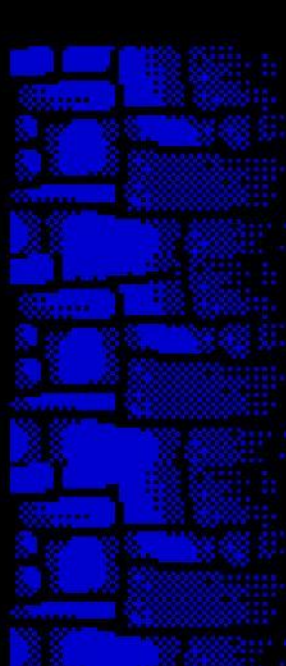


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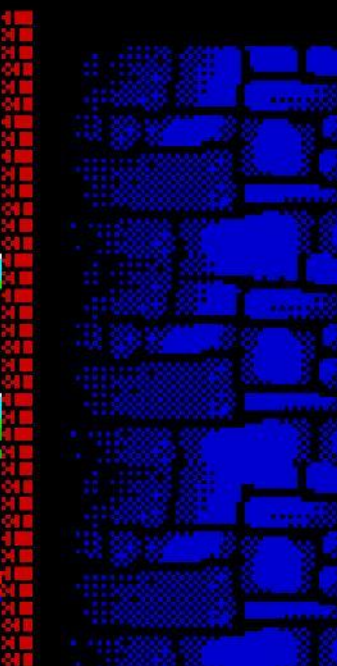


you touch a certain area on screen. Lasers and one way walls and a double character to control as well.. there is a lot in this game.

Very much a brain challenge and something definitely worth checking out.



000360



GENIUS

A MOUSE FOR YOUR SPECTRUM



Enterprising Spectrum owners wanting to move to a more modern input option had several mice to choose from. This is one of them.

Amongst the more well known mice for the Spectrum were the AMX Mouse, the Kempston Mouse and the Genius Mouse. They weren't cheap though with the Genius version, released by Dattel Electronics around 1987, costing of £39.99.

There were several versions of the mouse too. The first mouse had three buttons, then a few months later it was reduced to two buttons and a single port interface with a nice logo on it before changing again. In 1988 the mouse was bundled with a mouse mat and mouse holder for £49.99

NOW A TOTAL MOUSE/GRAPHICS PACKAGE FOR YOUR SPECTRUM AT A TRULY UNBEATABLE PRICE!!



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- Genius Mouse is a high resolution two button mouse featuring optical counting, teflon guides, microswitches, rubber coated ball and high quality interface.
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AVAILABLE FOR 48K/128K/+2/+2A/+3 COMPUTERS (PLEASE STATE WHICH WHEN ORDERING) NOTE THAT THE +2A COMPUTER HAS A BLACK CASE UNLIKE THE +2 WHICH HAS A GREY CASE. IT IS IMPORTANT TO STATE EXACTLY WHICH MODEL OF SPECTRUM YOU HAVE WHEN ORDERING.

ONLY £49.99
TOTAL PACKAGE INCLUDES GENIUS MOUSE, INTERFACE, OCP ADVANCED ART STUDIO PLUS FREE MOUSE MAT AND HOLDER

FREE!
MOUSE MAT AND MOUSE HOLDER (WORTH £12.99) WITH EACH PACKAGE

In 1991 the advert changed to a different mouse altogether but the actual hardware picture looked the same as before. In 1992 the hardware picture was removed from adverts so we could only see the artists impression. I could not find a picture of this mouse anywhere.

Back to my version then.

The Spectrum, being initially tape based, never had a standard graphic interface, and even when the +3 arrived, there was no move into making one.

The afore mentioned companies all produced packages that could use mice along with several software houses, these were mainly graphics packages such as the one provided with this mouse, OCP Art Studio.

The nicely designed box shows off what you can achieve with the mouse, and inside we get the included OCP art studio. and the dreaded Lenslock to use it.

The Interface

The interface that has two 9 pin ports. The right hand one is for the mouse and the left hand one is for as Kempston joystick. This gives the game away, and the mouse is fully Kempston compatible, and works with any software that supports that.

If you remember back to episode 59 when I reviewed the modern K-Mouse interface, you'll recall Velesoft have modified a lot of games to work with it, meaning they are also compatible with this, at least the ones that run on a 48k machine.



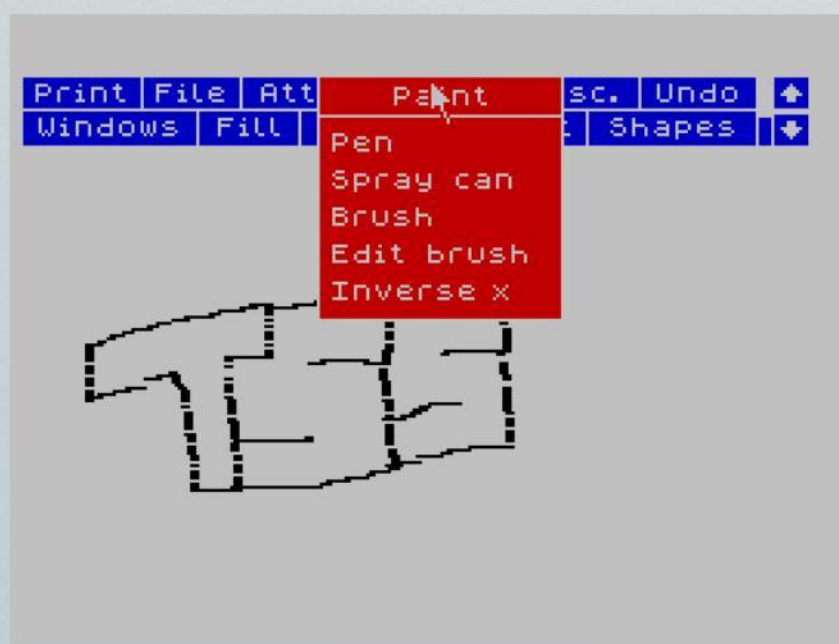
The Mouse

The mouse itself is well made and reminds me of an Amiga tank mouse. It sits well in the hand and the buttons have a solid click to them. Obviously being from the 80's this is a ball mouse. No infrared or lasers here.

Inserting the interface into a Spectrum, plugging in the mouse and we are ready to go. First we'll try OCP art studio.

The Software

I loading this via the TZXduino to avoid any issues with DivIDE or smart cards and once loaded we get the mouse pointer. Familiar to modern computers, but slightly odd for a Spectrum.



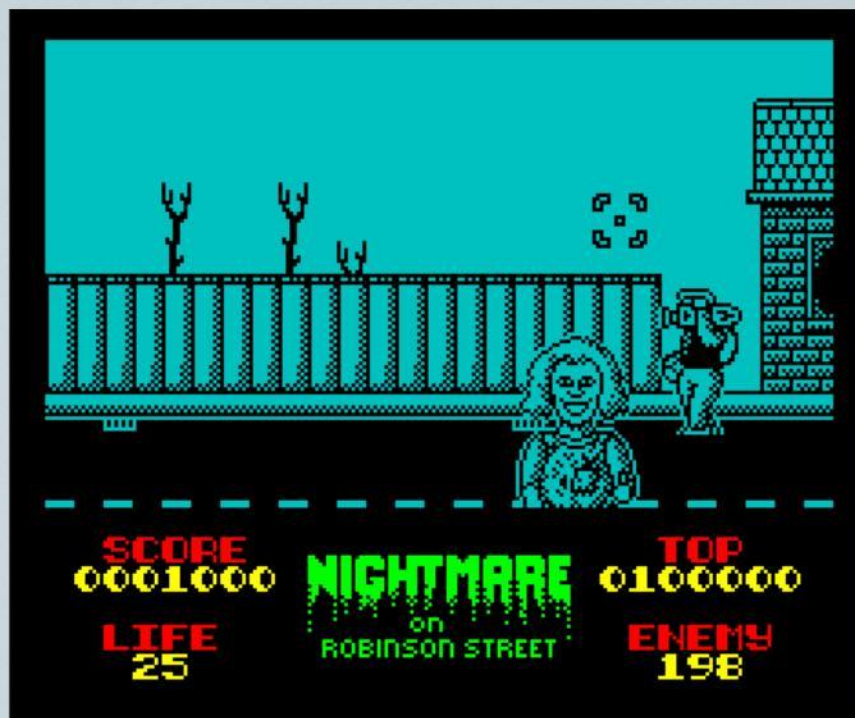
Genius Mouse

Everything works as you would expect. You can use the menus to select something like a pen type and then use it to draw what ever you want.

The mouse buttons have the same function, so no different options or contact menus for the right button, it just replicates a left click.

The pointer moves a bit slow, even set as the fastest option during loading, but it's certainly usable and makes the feeling a little weird in conjunction with the Speccy.

The Games



There were very few, if any games available at the time this was released and it wasn't until much later when people began to hack mouse options into older titles. There was very little in the way of other software either, it seemed no one was interested in giving this little mouse a chance.

Picking some game from the Velesoft website, we can finally try it out for something more entertaining than drawing lines.

Batty, familiar to most of you, is a basic yet excellent breakout clone. It plays great with a mouse, and gives you much more of a smooth experience and better control. The left and right is a bit slow, but apart from that, really nice.

I tried several games, some didn't work at all like Flying Shark, but most of them, when modified, need more than 48k. Nightmare on Robinson Street worked fine though and this Operation Wolf style game was a pleasure to play. Using a mouse to move a gun site is so much more intuitive than using keys or a joystick.

Arkanoid worked until I lost a life and then crashed and Silkworm refused to load fully. You have to be careful which games to choose, but I'm sure there will be something for everyone.

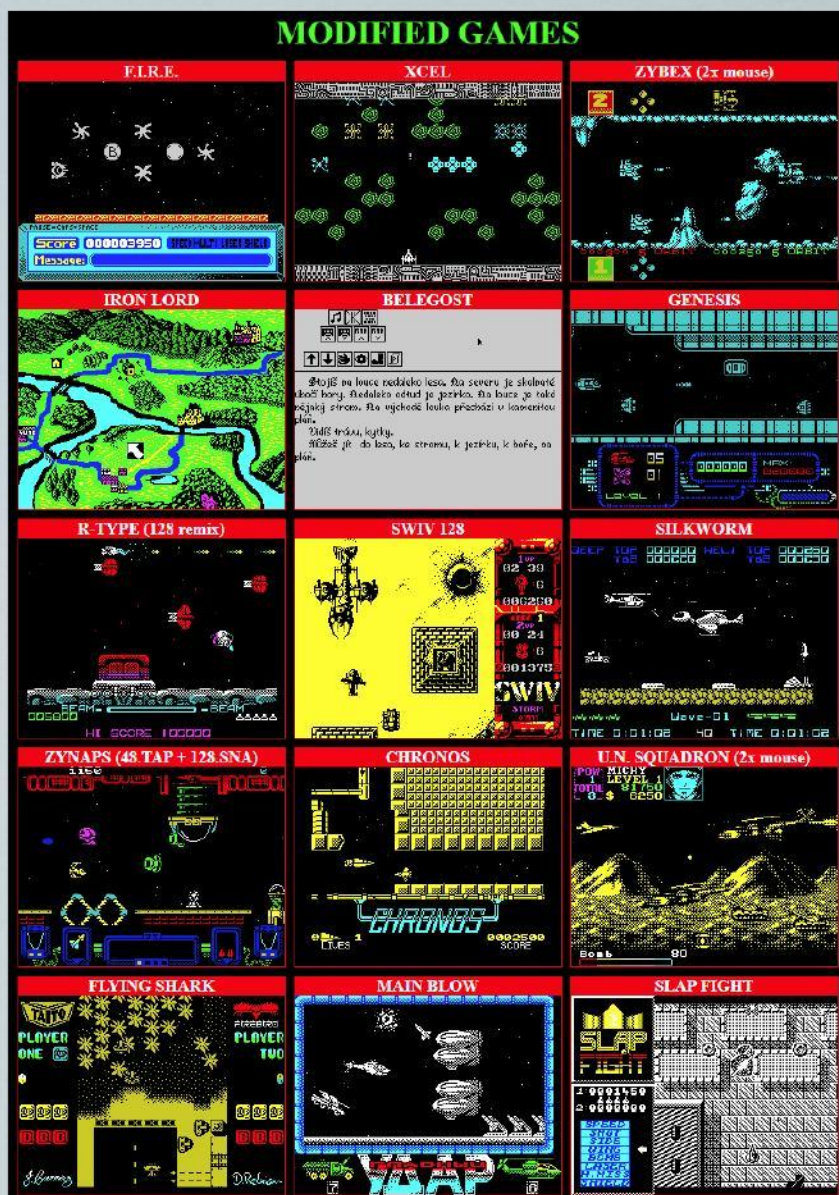
Because it was the 80's when this was released and because there were a few different mouse standards and because of the tape media, mice

never caught on for the Spectrum. Their use was limited, and only the art packages really took advantage of them.

A nice little piece of Spectrum hardware history then, but something to be put away and never used again.

There are many games and utilities that have been hacked to work with the Kempston (and therefore the Genius) mouse.

<https://velesoft.speccy.cz/kmsoft.htm>

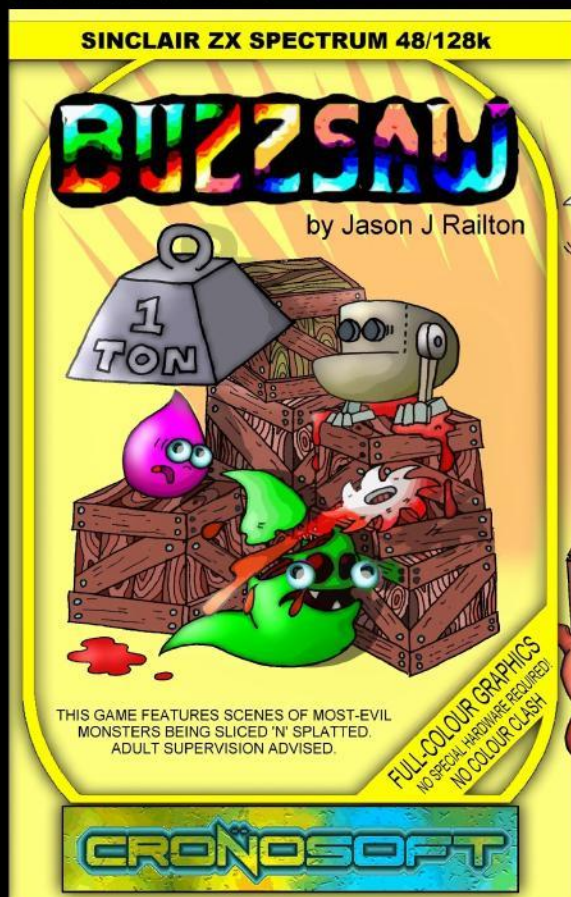
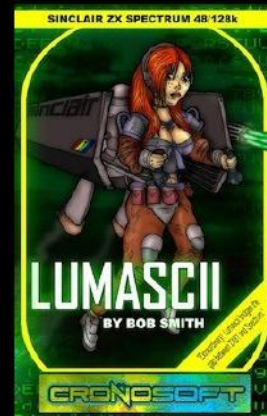


If you want to experience playing games and don't have a real mouse you can buy a K-Mouse interface from ByteDelight or use the FUSE emulator.



CRONOSOFT

SPECTRUM GAMES ON REAL MEDIA



More Games On Our Website

<https://cronosoft.fwscart.com>

APPLE JAM

DK'Tronics 1983

Apple Jam is an early game with a typically silly premise, but the Spectrum games scene was full of such games.

The idea is you have to eat the apples as they drop from the top of the screen, avoid the rampant rats, stay slim using a sauna and if all else fails, jump into a lift. Yes, it all sounds crazy.

The screen is split into three areas. The top section has a conveyor belt that continually churns out apples. The middle section is where the player moves left or right. In this area is a lift and a sauna. The bottom part of the screen is where the rats are. They run about and eat any apples you miss, growing larger as they do.

Each time you eat an apple, you put on weight and putting on too much will cause you to have a fit. You can keep in shape by visiting the sauna, but while you do the apples can fall to the bottom of the screen and get eaten by a rat. Each time it eats, it too gets bigger and if it gets too big it will jump up the middle section and chase you.

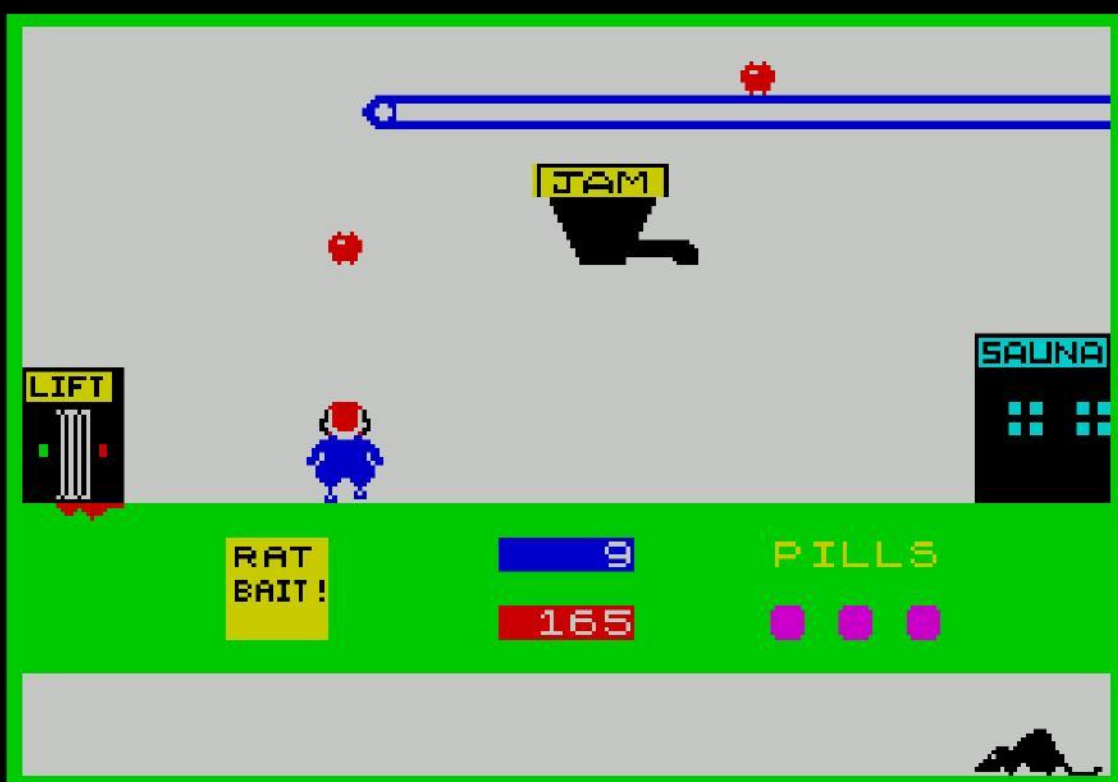
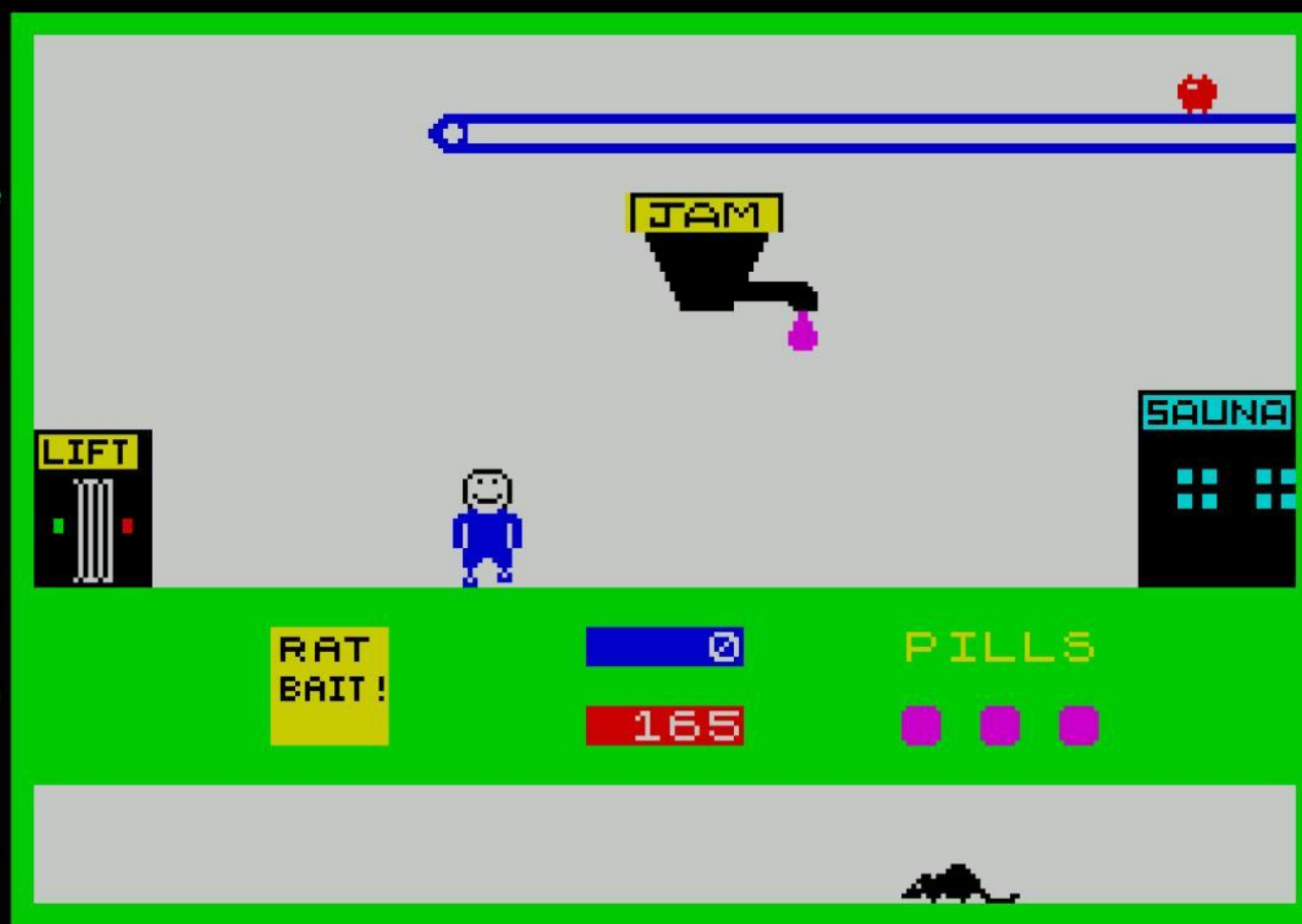
You can squash the rat by jumping into the lift and timing the decent - nice!

As the game progresses a hornet may appear too and the only way to avoid this is to jump in the sauna again!

The game has basic graphics and basic sound but it is 16k and from 1983.

The movement is character based but control is responsive and there is a game in there somewhere.

Not the best game but certainly original.



RUBY RUNABOUT

1984 Scorpio Software

Ruby Runabout puts you in the role of a Reggie the ruby thief attempting to steal a large Ruby.

The game is a text-based adventure but some of the locations do feature basic graphics. The parser used is typical of that time period of being just two words at a time for example "take coins" and with it only featuring a few screens with pretty simple puzzles this seems reasonable.

The screen is divided into a top half that features the description with a simple graphic appearing for some screens and a text prompt at the bottom of the screen.

The game does feature a rather questionable puzzle where you encounter a post-box with a rather tempting letter hanging out of it. Should you take it you find that it is in fact a letter bomb and your hands are blown off and the game ends.

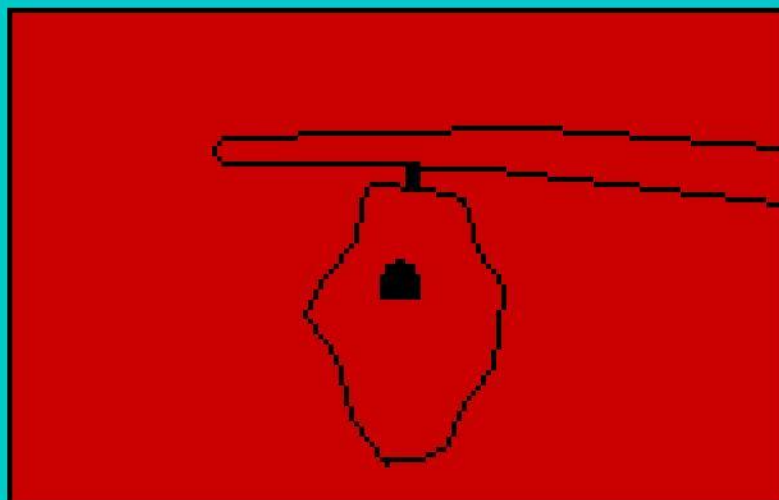
Despite this and the simplicity of the actual game I found it to be a fun distraction and with its short nature one that didn't drag out the game too much.

Recommended to casual adventure fans but too simple for the more hardcore.

Review by Lee Price



```
A CAR WASH
EXITS : NORTH
I CAN SEE :
          A COIN SLOT
```



```
A WASPS NEST
EXITS : NORTH & EAST
I CAN SEE :
          A WASP
          SOME SLIPPERS
```


LOTUS ESPRIT TURBO CHALLENGE



Gremlin Graphics 1990

Lotus Esprit Turbo Challenge will be known to many players and it was also available on other formats including the Amiga and Atari ST. The spectrum version is much the same game with the player having to qualify through each phase to earn their Lotus Licence.

The game starts with some nice music and detail screens which are interesting the first time you see them, but onto the game itself then.

There are plenty of settings for the player to mess around with before the race including control method, difficulty, gear changes and music. Once set to your preferred controls, the first race begins.

Taking up the top third of the screen, the play area looks and feels tiny. The bottom third contains a picture of the car and the middle third holds the position, gear and speed, amongst other things. The actual play area feels constrained and squashed, and you have trouble seeing things on the road ahead.

In play the sound is quite nice, with a good engine sound, but this cuts out when the tyre screeching sound is used. Control is nice and crisp and despite being a small play area the feeling of speed is portrayed well.

A problem you will encounter are jumps. When you go over a jump the track vanishes beneath you and you have no idea where you will land. This could be off the road, on the track or on top of another car. If you do go off road then your speed drops making qualifying harder. Hitting other cars too, slows you down, but at least you don't burst into flames like some other racers.

The graphics are well drawn, monochrome with shading, and the car's animation works well. Road side objects look fine and the split colour scheme works most of the time. The colours change for each level too, but the track feels the same.

Difficulty is OK and you can choose how hard or easy the game is at the start. Choosing their easy option will give you a long game if you are a half-decent player. It is still tricky getting past the cars especially when they cluster together and block the road.

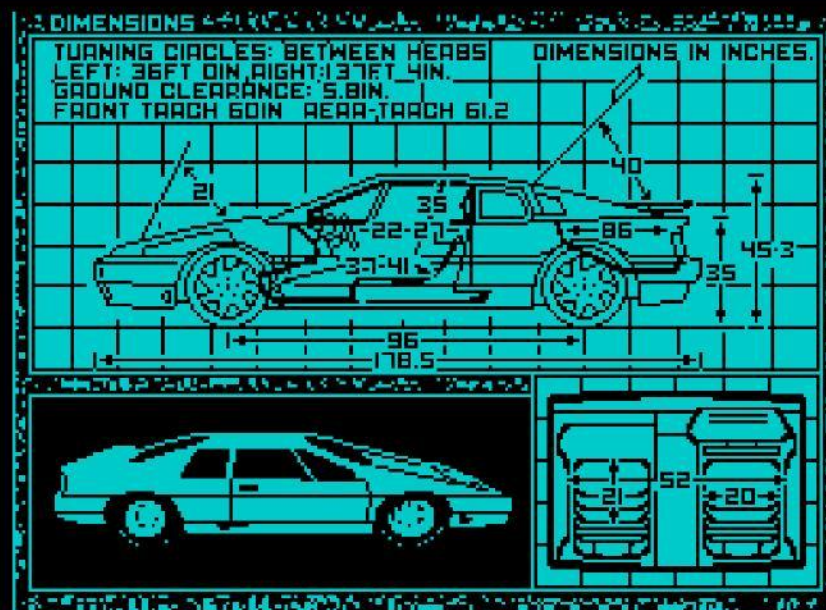
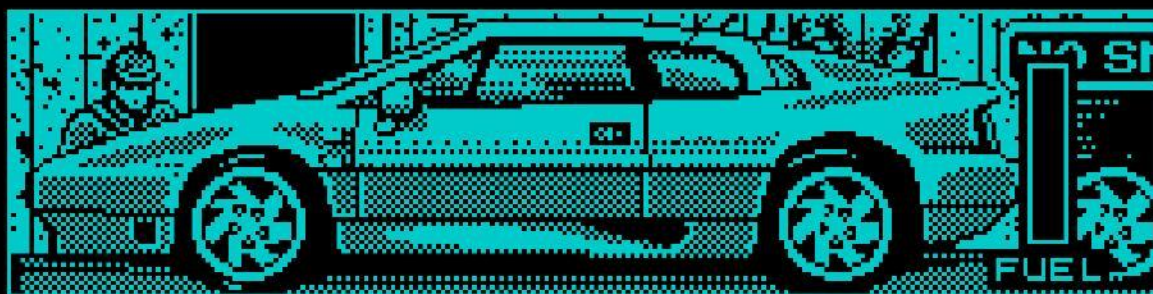
The game has a two player mode which uses the bottom third of the screen as the second player view, which is a neat idea, but I would still have liked the single player window to be larger.

Overall a good racer, and one to try out if you enjoy driving games.



13th

Gear: 5 Speed: 115
Rpm: Fuel: Lap: 1/5



9th

Gear: 5 Speed: 124
Rpm: Fuel: Lap: 1/6



FACTORY

BREAKOUT

Poppysoft 1984



Here we have a rather unusual game written by Steve Crow who later went on to producing classics like Wizard's Lair, Uridium and Starquake. This though is an early release, but still plays really well.

The idea is to help the little robot Zirky escape from the robot factory that has been taken over by aliens and is about to blow up. The game has three sections to complete before Zirky gets a chance to escape. The first section has Zirky in his little pod with deadly micron rays heading towards him. You have to rotate around and shoot the rays before they reach him. This is an interesting section, and it is tricky to keep up with.

The screen layout is nice and colourful and gameplay, although simple, is great as you battle against time to avoid Zirky being blown up.

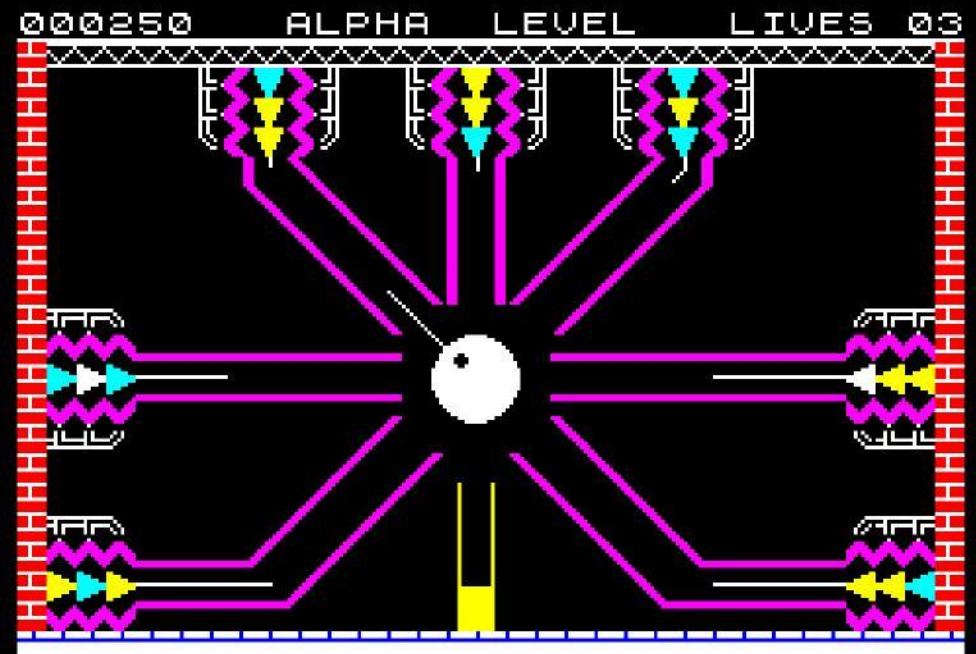
If he escapes then it's onto the next section and here Zirky must get past the rejection line of the robot plant. Deadly lasers fire down at different speeds, and you have to time Zirky's movement so he doesn't get zapped. This is a quick section that shouldn't prove too tricky. If you take too long though, the killer canary will attack. Only in Spectrum games do you get killer canaries!

The last section is a platform game where Zirky has to change the colour of doors in the lift room to finally escape. Here you have to use the lifts to get to different levels and avoid the chasing robots. This is the trickiest part of the game. The chasing aliens are hard to avoid, but they can be destroyed by using the flashing things on some levels. These work like power pills in Pacman and when used the aliens flash meaning you can kill them.

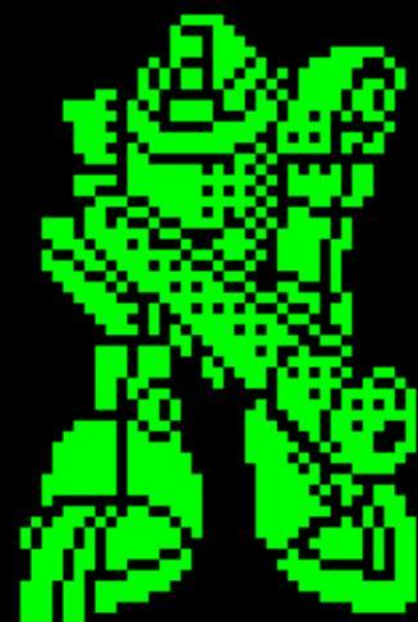
You have to change the door colours three times before they vanish and allow Zirky to escape. Because of all these changes it is tricky to complete this section and when you do it's back to the production line and then back into the lift room. This repeats several times, each time with the aliens getting faster.

The graphics are well drawn, nicely animated and smooth moving and sound is used well with some small tunes and a variety of sound effects.

Not a bad game then, and certainly a tough challenge. Definitely worth a quick play.



SPACE HARRIER™ II



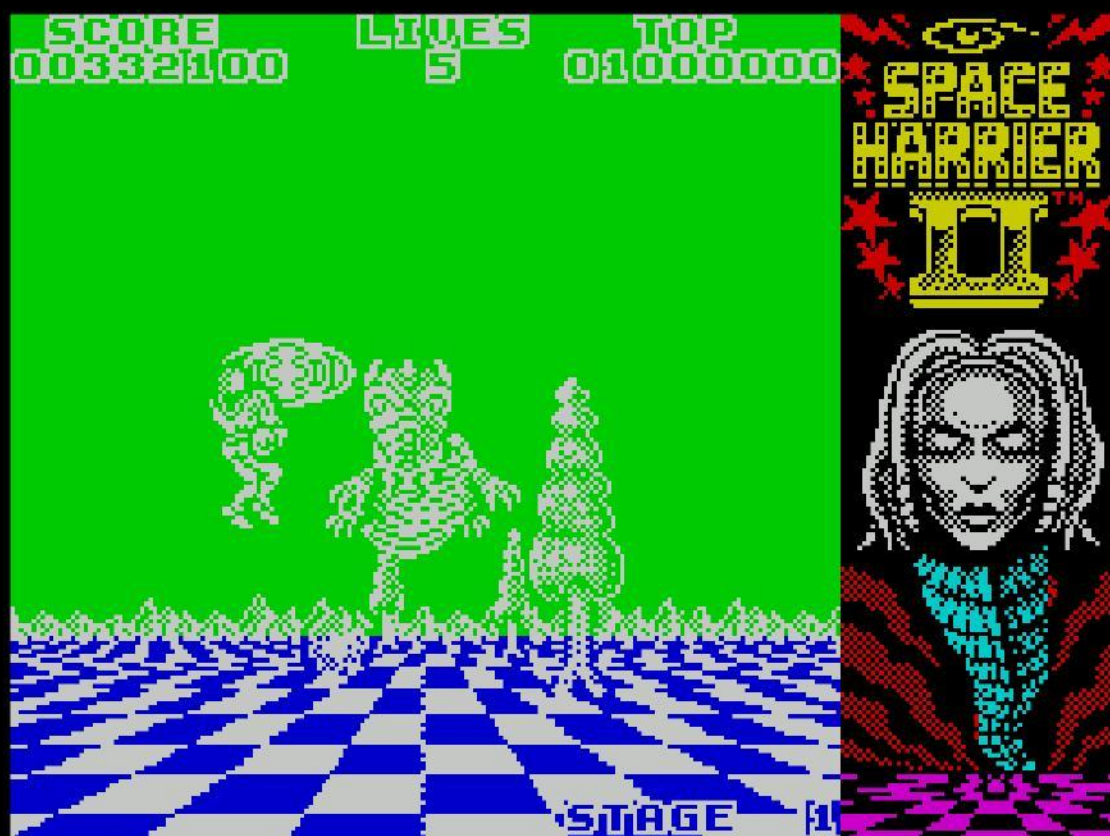
Grandslam 1990

This is the second in the series as the title would suggest, but lets jump back a little before we play the game. Space Harrier was originally released in the arcade by Sega in 1985. It was a 3D run and gun game with impressive graphics, a tiled scrolling ground, impressive music, massive monsters, good sound and speech. It was great to play in the arcades

Conversions were soon out for the more powerful consoles, with Sega's own machines getting some excellent ports, especially the Dreamcast. Home computer and console versions followed with the c64, Amstrad and Megadrive getting a version, amongst others.

The Spectrum would always struggle with this style of game. It doesn't have the hardware to move large blocks of graphics about and it doesn't have sprite scaling. It was, though, quite good. The graphics were large and well defined and the action was very reminiscent of the arcade.

The main character could walk or fly using his jet-powered laser canon, avoid rocks and trees as he made his way to complete mayhem and destruction, and obviously shoot anything in sight.



In 1988 Space Harrier 2 came out released by Grandslam and it's much of the same really. Flying along, dodging the ground and air based enemies, shooting and generally having fun.

The graphics look really nice. Well drawn and clearly based on the arcade machine. Things move smoothly, and the action is fast and furious, quite impressive for a Spectrum.

Things arrive from the distance, firing round missiles, and get larger as they approach. This is helped by a reduce playing area, the rest of the screen taken up by a panel that serves no real purpose.

You have to dodge the missiles and land based obstacles, and of course shoot back. Every now and then you get a larger boss to fight, and these take a lot of hits to get rid of.

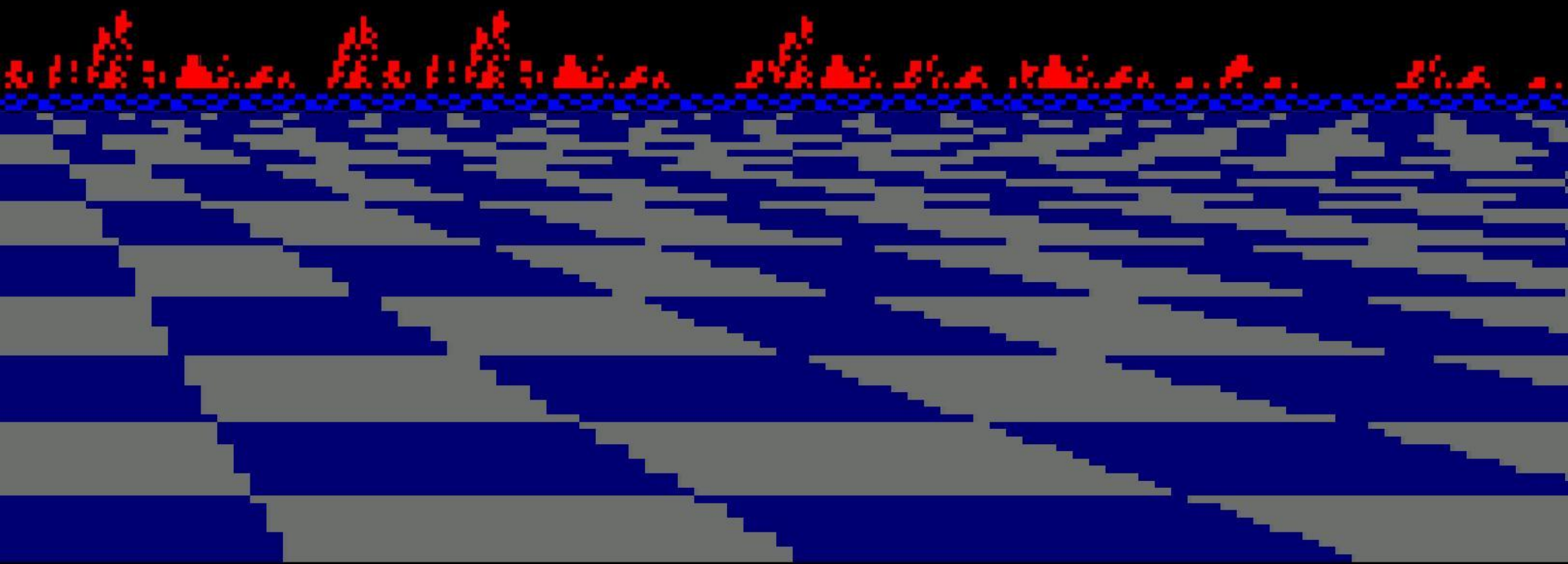
You can run along the ground, or take to the air and fly, the main sprite changing angle as you do so.

The sound has two settings, music or no music. If you have no music, then you get lack lustre sound effects. The weak firing sound and a similarly bad explosion. A bit poor considering it is a 128k game. If, however you choose music, then you get a nice tune, even though it slows down when the screen gets busy, and digitised speech. It's a real shame they couldn't have had both.

Difficulty wise, it's about the same as the arcade game, but slightly harder due to the colour restrictions. Sometimes it can be tricky to see the enemy when they are drawn in the same colour, monochrome, against a sky and ground covered in scenery or missile, also in the same monochrome style.

Control is good and responsive, and overall I like this version of the game. The nearest I got to playing the original was having a few goes on the Sega Dreamcast version, and the gameplay and feeling of the Speccy game is pretty much the same.

I spent a while playing this, and although it has it's flaws, for example the music slowing down, poor sound effects and the attribute jump as the horizon changes height, it's an impressive achievement.



ADVENTURON

<https://adventuron.io>

Chris Ainsley takes us on a tour, and shows us how easy it is to make a ZX Spectrum Next game using Adventuron



About Adventuron

Adventuron is a text adventure creation system that can create games for desktop, mobile, and more interestingly - Sinclair computers (including the ZX Spectrum Next). It is available to anyone with a (non-mobile) browser, and requires no account.

Adventuron's editor features friendly code completion and can be used on any device with a modern desktop browser.

Somewhat of a spiritual successor to QUILL and PAW, if you loved those classic systems, you should feel right at home with Adventuron.

```
: match "pick apple;get apple" {  
  : if (is_at "forest" && has_not_created "apple") {  
    : print "You reach up and take an apple from the tree."  
    : pocket  
  }  
  : done;  
}
```

apple	apple
sleeping troll	
treasure	an apple
troll	

8-Bit Compatibility Mode

Adventuron's new "8-bit compatibility mode" limits Adventuron to using a subset of features that are approximately compatible with DAAD (see right).

Enabling this mode will check for 8-bit compatibility at runtime, and warning you if you are using an unmapped feature.

The subset of features you are allowed to use are documented, but as a rule of thumb, Adventuron's (mapped) features sit somewhere in the middle of the QUILL/PAW feature set.

As long as you stick within the prescribed subset of features, Adventuron will let you emit your Adventuron source code as DAAD code.

Adventuron features an 8-bit transpiler which will emit DAAD source code, as well as graphic assets compatible with the Spectrum.

The transpiler also opens up features that were previously quite advanced to code in PAW or DAAD, such as the easy ability to switch a location graphic, print an ad-hoc graphic, add a door between two locations, or to check if an object has been created.

There are some advanced features of DAAD that are simply not available from translated Adventuron code, because Adventuron's implementation of those features is just too different to be mapped, but the com-

patibility mode takes care of any hiccups, and as far as features go, Adventuron (in 8-bit compatibility mode) is more advanced than quill, and *almost* as advanced as PAW.

Adventuron also incorporates a custom written .PNG to ZX Spectrum screen format converter for when exporting graphics to Spectrum.

Graphics targeting +3 must use Spectrum compatible images 256 x 80 (typically via Multipaint), but the graphics themselves can be managed as simple PNG files, and the converter does the hard work.

For games targeting ZX Next, then any image of 256 x 80 with 255 or less colours can be used. Adventuron will convert to a PCX file.

```
#####  
# Connecti #####  
#####  
connections  
from, di  
hut,  
]  
}
```


DAAD

DAAD is a text adventure game interpreter for multiple systems, written by Tim Gilberts, under contract for Spanish software publisher, Aventuras AD.

Andrés Samudio, the owner of Aventuras AD, kindly put the binaries of DAAD into the public domain, such that it is now available for all to use. DAAD had been used by the Spanish text adventure community for a little while for Tim and Stefan Vogt restored missing files and binaries for an English language release.

The DRC compiler (DAAD Reborn Compiler) and Maluva extension (DAAD library for interactively loading bitmap graphics and additional text from mass storage).

Both DRC and Maluva are written by Carlos Sanchez, known to the community as Uto (Twitter: @uto_dev).

The DAAD interpreter is very portable, and is very similar to PAW and QUILL (both produced by Gilsoft), Tim's previous company.

You will need to make sure that you have installed the DAAD Ready package, which is available here:

<http://ngpaws.com/downloads/DAAD/DAADReady/>

Unzip the contents of the DAAD Ready zipfile to a folder called DAAD Ready - which is a one-time step.

Multipaint

Multipaint (<http://multipaint.kameli.net/>) is a graphic editing application for Windows / Linux / OSX, that allows artists to draw graphics that are ZX Spectrum compliant. When building a spectrum text adventure game with Adventuron, this editor is recommended, to ensure that there will be no graphic artifacts in the conversion process.



Tutorial - Building a ZX Spectrum Game With Adventuron

THE CAVE OF MAGIC is a small text adventure game in which the player simply has to access the cave of magic, which is full of - er - treasure.

The Cave is being guarded by a troll who - surprise surprise - will not let you pass.

Talking to the troll or examining the troll will give the player a hint - the troll is HUNGRY. Time to look for some food.

The forest to the south of the cave describes itself as having tall TREES. An examination of the trees will tell the player they are apple trees. If the player types PICK APPLE, or GET APPLE, they are rewarded with an apple (only once though).

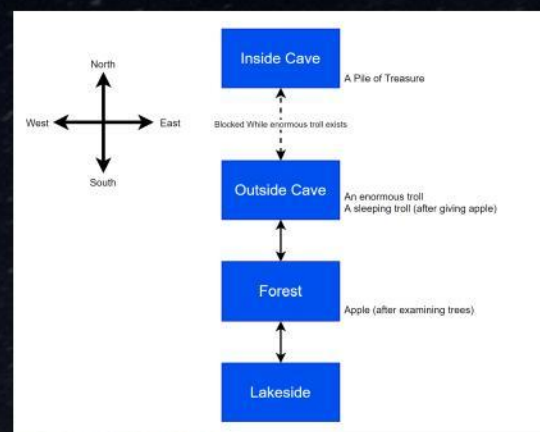
From here, it's off to the north to GIVE APPLE to the troll. Unfortunately (for the troll), the apple is enchanted and sends the troll straight to sleep. The TROLL is then replaced by the SLEEPING TROLL, and now the cave is accessible. Going NORTH again, will display the interior of the CAVE and inform the player that they have won this very tiny text adventure game.

This tutorial is available at : <https://adventuron.io/documentation/tutorial-a.html>

You can type the code into the editor here: <https://adventuron.io/classroom>

What follows in this article is an abbreviated form of the above tutorial (without benefit of animated gifs). Do be aware that extensive editor features are not being described here, such as hovers, validations, and autocompletes (with CONTROL + SPACE).

Now - let's start coding.



locations

The locations {} section is where Adventuron stores the locations that will be used in the adventure.

In the cave of magic, we define 4 locations, the lakeside, the forest, outside the cave, and inside the cave.

Every element in the locations section has an id (e.g. lakeside), a type (location), and a description (the part that will be printed).

Every Adventuron game needs a start location too, so we define the start location as one of the identifiers of the locations.

```
start_at = lakeside

locations {
  lakeside      : location "You are by the side of a beautiful
lake." ;
  forest        : location "You are on the forest path.\nTall
trees tower over you on both sides." ;
  outside_cave  : location "You are standing outside the cave of
magic." ;
  inside_cave   : location "You are inside the cave of magic." ;
}
```


ADVENTURON

Connections

The connections {} section is where we connect locations together. Connections have three elements per line, the FROM location, the DIRECTION, and the TO location.

When defining connections, ignore any blocks that you might want to apply later in the game. Directions are bi-directional by default, meaning that if the lakeside leads north to the forest, we can imply that the forest leads south to the lakeside.

```
connections {
  from, direction, to = [
    lakeside,    north,    forest,
    forest,      north,    outside_cave,
    outside_cave, north_oneway, inside_cave,
  ]
}
```

Objects

The objects {} section is used to store objects we require in the game. There are two types of object. A scenery object is for objects that cannot be picked up, and a regular object "object" is used for objects that can be picked up and taken by the player.

We can use the "at" attribute to specify where the object will be at the start of the game.

Not shown here, but if an object has a static (non context sensitive) examine message, you can use msg="Your examine message here" on each object to specify the examine message. Examine messages can be configured in the on_command {} section too (shown later).

```
objects {
  troll      : scenery "an enormous troll (guarding cave to north)" at = "outside_cave" ;
  sleeping_troll : scenery "an enormous troll (sleeping)" ;
  apple      : object  "an apple" ;
  treasure    : object  "a pile of treasure" at = "inside_cave" ;
}
```

on_startup

The on_startup {} section is executed when the game starts, but before the first location is described. We can use this to display the goal of the game and / or the game credits.

This is the first example showing commands. There are many commands that are supported in Adventuron. The two commands used here are "print" - which prints some text to the screen, and "press_any_key" - which waits for some user input.

```
on_startup {
  : print "You must find the treasure in the cave of magic.";
  : press_any_key ;
}
```

A clear_screen is always performed after the on_startup {} block is executed, and then the start location will be printed, and the game will start proper. Feel free to experiment. A good thing to try is excluding the press_any_key line and see what happens.

on_describe

The on_describe {} section is executed every time a location is described (either by entering it from another location or by the player typing LOOK or R).

There are two core pieces of logic in here.

- (1) If the troll is present when the location is being described, then print out a message that tells the player that the cave belongs to the troll so the player should go away. This is not strictly necessary but without flourishes like this,

```
on_describe {

  : if (is_present "troll") {
    : print "The troll says, \"THE CAVE IS MINE, GO AWAY\"." ;
  }

  : if (is_at "inside_cave" ) {
    : print "CONGRATULATIONS !" ;
    : print "YOU WON THE GAME !" ;
    : print "YOUR RANKING IS : JUNIOR ADVENTURER !" ;
    : press_any_key ;
    : clear_screen;
    : win_game ;
  }

}
```


the troll would seem lifeless.

(2) If the player is inside the cave of magic, then print some messages to tell the player that they have won the (very short) game, and then wait for the player to press a key, then clear the screen and tell adventuron that the player won the game (will reset the game to play again).

Barriers

Barriers are things that block access between two or more locations. There are three types of barrier.

A block, which block access to a location from any direction. A block_path, which blocks access between two specific locations, and a door, which is an openable, closable, lockable door between two locations.

A block tends to have a message, and an activating condition. It could be a boolean variable (not shown here). In the example show below, the barrier is active when the (non-asleep) troll exists.

```
barriers {
  block_cave : block {
    location      = inside_cave
    message       = THE TROLL IS GUARDING THE CAVE.
    block_when_exists = troll
    show_blocked_exit = true
  }
}
```

On_command

The on_command {} section is used to check for specific text patterns that the player might enter into the command line, and to process that text in the context of the game state.

There are four key VERB NOUN combinations we need to capture for this game.

(1) If the player types EXAMINE TROLL or TALK TROLL and the troll (non asleep troll) is present in the current location, then clear the screen, and print a message telling the player that the troll exclaims it is hungry. Wait for a keypress, then redescribe the current location. This examine/talk message is important so the player has a clue how to remove the troll as a barrier.

(2) If the player types EXAMINE TREES or EXAMINE TREE or LOOK TREE or LOOK TREES (examine and look are synonyms), and if the player is in the forest location, print out a message that tells the player that the trees are apple trees. This tells the player that they might be able to try and get an apple (for the troll).

(3) If the player types PICK APPLE or GET APPLE and the player is in the forest, and the apple has never been created before, then create an apple in the player's pocket, and print a message telling the player that they picked an apple.

(4) If typing GIVE APPLE or THROW APPLE when the (non asleep) troll is present and the apple is carried, clear the screen, print out a message that tells the player that the apple sends the troll to sleep, and swap the troll for the sleeping troll, then wait for a keypress, then after the player presses a key, redescribe the current location.

```
on_command {

  : match "examine trees; examine tree" {
    : if (is_at "forest") {
      : print "Apple trees." ;
    }
  }

  : match "examine troll;talk troll" {
    : if (is_present "troll") {
      : clear_screen;
      : print "\"I'M SO HUNGRY\", says the enormous TROLL in the deepest possible voice." ;
      : press_any_key ;
      : redescribe;
    }
  }

  : match "pick apple;get apple" {
    : if (is_at "forest" && has_not_created "apple") {
      : print "You take an APPLE from one of the trees." ;
      : pocket "apple";
    }
  }

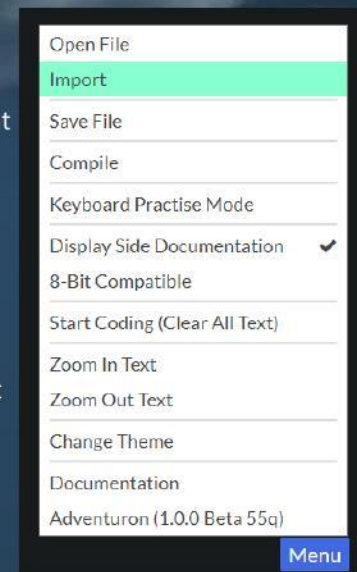
  : match "give apple;throw apple" {
    : if (is_present "troll" && is_carried "apple") {
      : print "The troll grabs the apple from you hungrily. Unfortunately (for the troll), the apple is an ENCHANTED APPLE, and sends the troll directly to sleep." ;
      : destroy "apple" ;
      : swap o1 = "troll" o2 = "sleeping_troll" ;
      : press_any_key ;
      : redescribe;
    }
  }
}
```


ADVENTURON

Importing Graphics

To import graphics into Adventuron select the MENU / IMPORT option. Your graphics should be PNG files that are 256 x 80 pixels, and should be 256 colours or less (if targeting ZX Next) or ZX Spectrum compliant if targeting +3 (edit with Multipaint to ensure this). The names of the PNG files should match the identifiers of your locations (e.g. if you import a file called "lakeside.png" then after import it will automatically be displayed when you are in the lakeside location).

Adventuron can bulk import graphics using a zip file. For this tutorial, to import (ZX Spectrum Next) compatible graphics (created by Ricardo Oyon), first download graphics from <https://adventuron.io/graphics.zip> to your downloads folder, then use the IMPORT menu option and select the graphics.zip file from your downloads folder. Four graphics will be imported (one for each location of the tutorial game). Feel free to examine the structure of the zipfile to learn how to use this shortcut in your own games.



Exporting to DAAD Ready

To export your game to DAAD Ready format, simply select the MENU / Export DAAD (+ Graphics) from the Adventuron Menu. It will create a zipfile in your downloads folder.

Creating a ZX Next / +3 Package

1: Unzip the contents of the zip file created by Adventuron to your DAAD Ready folder. Adventuron will use the name TEST.DSF for the emitted game sourcecode by default (inside the zip), so every time you have a new version of your game to test, overwrite the existing source. As a general rule DO NOT customise the emitted sourcecode without renaming it first. Typically you will have no need to manually edit the TEST.DSF file.

2: Create a command prompt whilst inside the DAADREADY folder, type either ZXNEXT.BAT or ZXPLUS3.BAT to build (and test) your ZX Spectrum Next or ZX Spectrum +3 games, respectively.

3: Running the BAT scripts above will not only compile your game, but they will also run an emulator that will test your game. You usually have to press a key to launch the emulator after compiling (see screenshot).

4: When finished testing, close the emulator window, and this will bring back the prompt in your command window.

5: Repeat this process as you develop your game.

```
Command Prompt - ZXNEXT.BAT

C:\utils\DAADREADY>ZXNEXT.BAT

-----
Compiling [Front End]...
DAAD Reborn Compiler Frontend 0.18 (C) Uto 2018-2020
Reading TEST.DSF
Checking Syntax...
#EXTERN: "MLV_NEXT.BIN" processed.
Generating TEST.json [Classic mode OFF]
TEST.json generated.

-----
Compiling [Back End]...
DAAD Reborn Compiler Backend 0.18 (C) Uto 2018-2020
EXTERN MLV_NEXT.BIN loaded at 0x843C
ODB size is 3921 bytes.
Database ends at address 37713 (0x9351)
XMessages size is 581 bytes in files of 64K.
Text compression saving: 636 bytes.
Wait while preparing images (if any)...
File TEST.TAP created.

"Press any key to run emulator, or Ctrl+C to cancel."
"To exit ZEsarUX emulator, press F5, then F10."
Press any key to continue . . .
```

NOTE : Your compiled .TAP file or .DSK file will be created in the RELEASES subfolder. A +3 game only needs the DSK file, but a ZX Spectrum game needs multiple files from within the RELEASES folder. For an example of how to distribute a game made this way, search for "Rite of the Druid ZX Next" with your favourite search engine, and download the distribution there for reference.

FIND OUT MORE

To find out more, feel free to check out the tutorial at adventuron.io/documentation/tutorial-a.html.



Spectrum Games Coded With Adventuron

There are over 60 games authored with Adventuron at time of writing, including seven targeted at either the ZX Spectrum or ZX Spectrum Next. Here follows a list of games targeting the humble Speccy.



Rite Of The Druid (Spectrum Next)

Graphics & game by Paul Weller

cool and refreshing and a faint mist blankets the base of the valleys.
Exits: N, S, E, W
>examine mist
The mist is pale and hangs low in the valleys, like a mirror to the clouds above. You watch for a while as it silently wanders across the landscape.
>s

Escape from Dinosaur Island DX (+3)

Graphic/Remake by Chris Ainsley, Original Game by Richard Pettigrew.



A tall cliff climbs away above you.
It is possible to scale it via the narrow winding path leading upwards.
Exits: West, Up
>

Last Night at the Office by Tim Jacobs



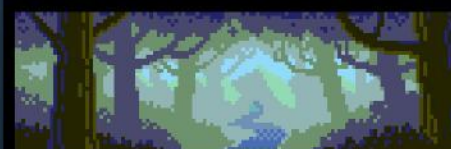
You are in the stairwell, 2nd floor - Office Level.
Exits: N, U, D
The door to the north is locked with a keypad lock.
>



Excalibur: Sword of Kings (+3)

Game/Graphics by Ian Smith / Shaun McClue. Adventuron Port by Chris Ainsley.

You are where the road turns eastwards. You see small hills in the distance.
Exits: South, East
>



Cave of Magic DX (+3 / Next), Game by Chris Ainsley, Graphics by Ricardo Oyon.

You are on the forest path.
Tall TREES tower over you on both sides.
Exits: N, S
>examine trees
Apple trees.
>



One More Thing (+3 / Next), Game / Graphics by Dee Cooke.

You are on a sun-drenched balcony. It faces west towards the nearby mountains.
Exits: E
You see a bird, the Champagne Lady, Lo Kingdom, a pot plant and a vegetable trough.
...

Barry Basic & The Quest For The Perfect Port (+3 / Next), Game / Graphics by Dee Cooke



You are in your study.
Exits: E
You see a bbc micro, a zx spectrum, some code printouts and a drawer.
>

NEW RELEASES



Name: Last Train to Tranz-Central
Type: Platform
Developer/s: Quantum Sheep



Name: Tut Tut
Type: Arcade
Developer/s: David A Stephenson



Name: Coloco
Type: Arcade
Developer/s: Tuxedo Games



Name: Federation Z
Type: Arcade
Developer/s: Furillo Productions



Name: Road Tripin
Type: Maze
Developer/s: Joesoft



Name: Parsec
Type: Shooter
Developer/s: Martin Mangan

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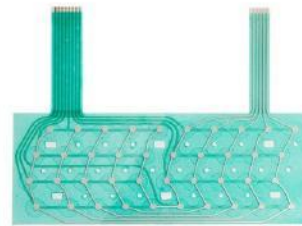
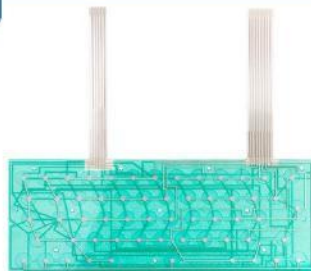
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Integrated divMMC double SD card interface.

Two joystick 9 pin ports

RGB out

Composite out

HDMI option - not active at the moment. RGB to HDMI adapter can be used.

Power button

Reset switch button

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BEACH HEAD

U.S. Gold 1984

Beach Head is a game of multiple parts, each taking the player closer to the target and destructions of an enemy gun emplacement.

Set against a backdrop of war, the game gives the player many different game styles and challenges and each one is a test of skill, control and resilience.

The first section is pointless though, you simply move the cursor to the flashing square which represents the secret passage. Hardly secret really, there is a huge flashing square over it.

Next you have to guide your fleet across a dangerous estuary to try and land on the beach. This is done by rotating you ship and changing the speed controls to get to the beech itself. This section is pretty easy once you know the patterns of the enemy torpedoes that are fired at you. You also have to avoid hitting the rocks too.

Once all ships have landed, you move another cursor to the beach and then protect the troops as they disembark. Here you take control of a gun and have to shoot incoming planes.

This section is really good, and the planes look really nice. Your ammo is replenished slowly, so you can't just sit and hold the fire key down. You control left, right up and down so you have to aim carefully to hit anything.

This can be quite challenging but this part is great to play, it kind of reminds me of 3D Tanx by DK'Tronics but with aeroplanes.

Next comes the enemy ships. Here you have to hit the ship that is firing back at you. To do this you move your gun to get the right trajectory. You are guided by a message at the bottom right telling you if you are too short or too long, and eventually you will get them all. The enemy are also adjusting their shots, so they will destroy one of your ships if you hang around too long.

If you survive this then it's back to moving the cursor again. I understand this is all part of the game and that it joins the different



sections up, but still feel it's a bit of a waste. A simple message would have done.

The next section is a horizontal scrolling tank part where you control your tank as it heads up the beach towards the gun.

The screen scrolls smoothly, but the land based obstacles are a bit bland. The tank animation is good though, and here you can move up and down to avoid the barricades, blocks and holes. As you progress you will come across gun emplacements that fire back, so you have to either dodge them or destroy them.

Some of the navigation on this section is really tricky too so you need to be careful and in some places almost pixel perfect.

Finally you arrive at the gun. A massive thing perched on top of a hill. The hill has various holes in it that need shooting in order, so as they flash you have to take them out.

As time ticks on, the gun slowly turns your way, meaning it a battle against time, and here the adrenalin starts to pump. If you don't do it in time, its back to the tank section for another try.

If you do manage to get all the small holes, then the gun explodes and the game is complete.

A tough challenge, but one certainly worth having a go at.

The variety of gameplay is impressive for a 48K game. The sound works well and control is good.

This is definitely one to play.



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ECHO KEYBOARD

MAKING MUSIC WITH THIS UNUSUAL AND UNIQUE
HARDWARE ADD-ON

There are several music programs for the Spectrum, there are several music and sound interfaces for the Spectrum and there are several keyboards for the Spectrum. But throw them all together and what do you get? The Echo Music Synthesiser.

This interesting piece of hardware was originally released in mid-1986 by HCCS at an alarming price of £59.95 for just the keyboard itself. You could also get an amplifier for a further £39.95 or buy them together for £84.90. Which option you chose still meant a large outlay, so you would have to be serious about wanting it.

Later Currys marketed the same device and somewhere along the line added Organ Master to the name. Presumably because the unit, which was mail order only, was not selling well and HCCS did a deal to allow Currys to add their own logo to it in exchange for the stores marketing and supply strength.

The keyboard is the thing that first strikes you, even from just looking at the adverts. This is a serious piece of kit and is very robust. The metal casing makes it heavy and substantial and you can see why the price was so high. It feels solid and is very well made.

The interface is hard wired to the keyboard with a decent length cable that was meant for the original 128k machine. It does however work fine on the Plus 2 Spectrum, the machine I used to test it.

Once plugged in, we can load the software that has the Currys brand bodged over the top of the original screen and we get a main screen that is terrible to read with white text on a cyan background. A little colour change would have made all the difference here.

Listed down the middle of the screen are the different instruments available, piano, strings, organ, popcorn, evolution, siren, synth and Hawaiian.

The piano sounds like a toy piano, but I suppose it's the best we can expect from the sound chip. String is a bit more richer in depth, especially when all three voices are playing together. Organ is not so much different from strings with a bit less vibrato and popcorn will sound familiar to anyone of a certain age who remembers the song of the same name.



Evolution can't really be used within a music track. It raises slowly and then flutters. The same can be said of siren, which replicates an American police siren. Synth is a bit disappointing and offers a fluttering sound with Hawaiian being very similar.

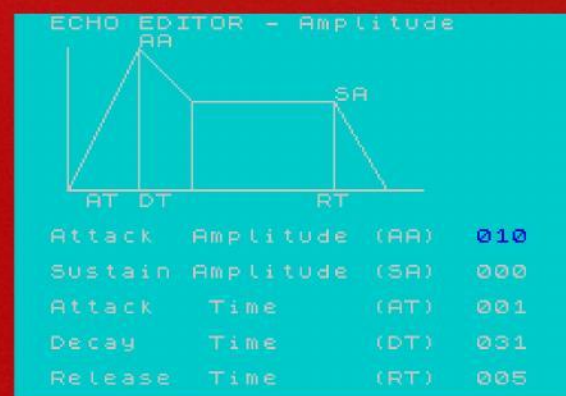
The Echo package then just allows you to play the Spectrum's AY chip using a decent keyboard. There is no additional hardware to produce more advanced sounds but there are a few tweaks available.

You can switch up and down across five octaves when playing, giving a nice range and you can also fine tune things with the pitch. Additionally you can edit any of the pre-sets using both Attack, Decay, Sustain and release as well as modifying the pitch to produce additional effects.

It's actually quite powerful if you know what your doing, and the only downside is that you are limited to the AY chip.

You can record, playback and loop music to build up your songs. Setting the record option gives you about 170 seconds of space and it will record all of the keys including swapping instruments and octaves.

This is a useful piece of hardware if you want to learn music, and I thought there was some teaching software that came with it, but I can't find any reference to it at all. I enjoyed setting this up and playing with the various functions,



recording my poor music and then playing it back. It was fun and the keyboard really is very good.

Sadly there is no midi option or additional instruments to load in, but given a few hours you could easily build up your own set.

A nice piece of kit then, fun to play with and a great toy if you are musically minded. Although the demo tune that comes with it doesn't really do it justice.



KIDS

Does a child find a Spectrum interesting in 2020?

My daughter like a lot of children her age (4) spend her time using a tablet or an old mobile phone to play games and learn from. So the thought occurred to me as to what her reaction would be to try old spectrum games etc, especially as she is used to touch screen and the high quality games of today. I decided to break this down into a couple of different angles, first I would try her with the education games that were aimed at her age group before trying her out on a few of the old classic titles. I thought it would be interesting as she would see them without the old nostalgia glasses on!



Image for illustration purposes

After a little look at few pieces of software I decided to go with two programs created by Widgit Software back in 1983.

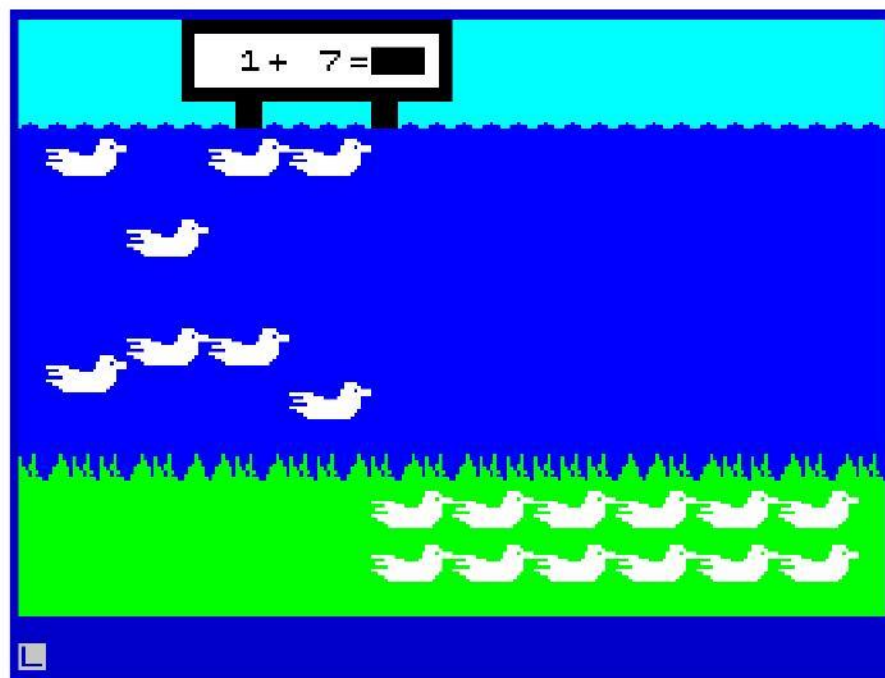
The first was Alphabet, a simple picture is drawn on the screen and you have to enter the first letter of the word that describes it. Simply put, if a rainbow is drawn you have to press the R key. The big question was, would she wait whilst the rainbow is drawn on screen? The answer was yes, she seemed to enjoy using this as it plays a jolly little tune when she pressed the correct key.

It was quite interesting to see how at first she viewed using a keyboard (I ran this on the next using an external keyboard in case we decided to hammer any of the keys down to hard!) but she quickly got used to this setup and was only a bit annoyed when she got through the alphabet and it started to loop with the same pictures coming up.

The second game was called Adding and Subtracting Ducks or the birdy game as she called it. This is again a very simple game that asked whether you want to add more ducks to the river up to a maximum of 20 or subtract some down to a minimum of 0.

This turned out to be a favourite of hers but was one that needed far more intervention on my part to prompt her to press certain keys to get ducks added or subtracted. She enjoyed counting the ducks on the river and loved the entering in of the number and in her words using the "Presenter" key. This was due to me telling her to press enter after she typed in the number for how many ducks she could count on the river.

She enjoyed this one so much that she now asks most nights if she can play the birdy game.



Time for some games...

After the education titles I tried her on one of the most iconic of Spectrum titles, that being Jetpac by Ultimate Play The Game.

Upon loading I selected the Kempston option and handed her the Bug joystick, despite this being a tad difficult for her to handle she really enjoyed playing it.

Whilst not being able to get of the first screen she soon got the basics of what to do but the frantic action of the game made it a too difficult for her.

The other title I tried her on was a favourite of hers on the tablet, the classic arcade game PacMan.

This was going to be the most interesting of the software tested as she really does like this and can recognize PacMan himself in everyday shapes etc. This was the one that really grabbed her attention and

something that she enjoyed, even the graphics on what is poor conversion didn't put her off.

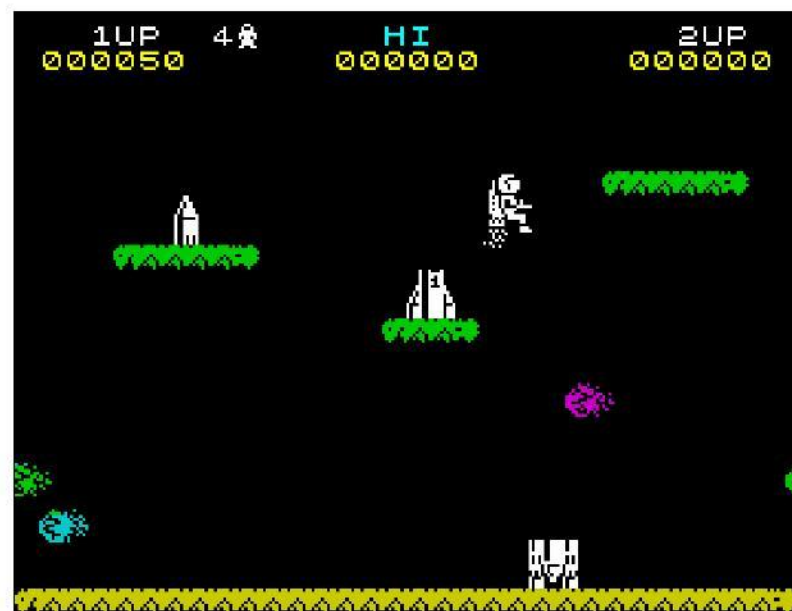
This shows that its often the simple and addictive nature of a game that is important and not the flashy graphics.

It was fun watching her playing these for the first time, reminding myself of how I first saw them over thirty years ago and here they are still being enjoyed. Hopefully this will start a new chapter in the hobby for myself as I see my daughter start to enjoy the many classic games that this wonderful machine has in its library. Now I wonder how long before we have two player games and the frustration of Jet Set Willy?

Article by Lee Price



Image for illustration purposes



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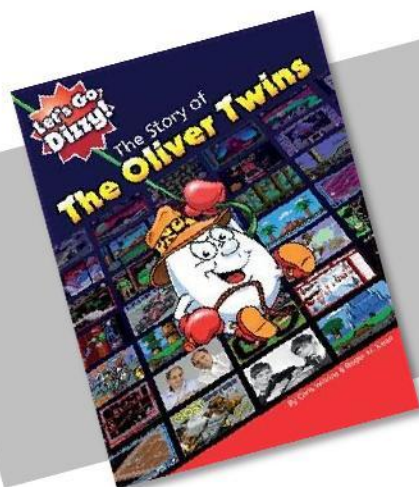
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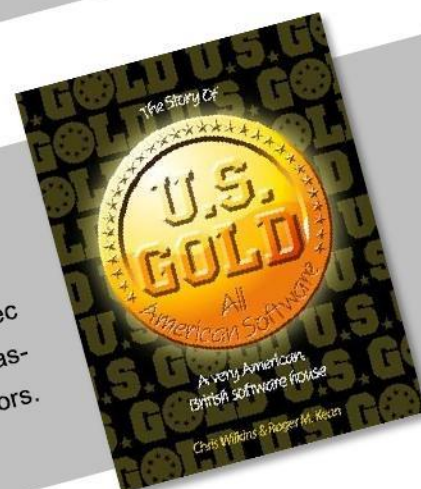
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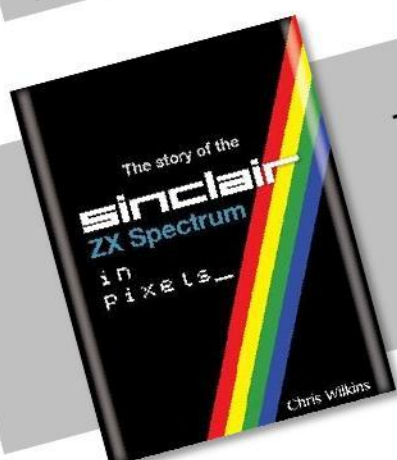
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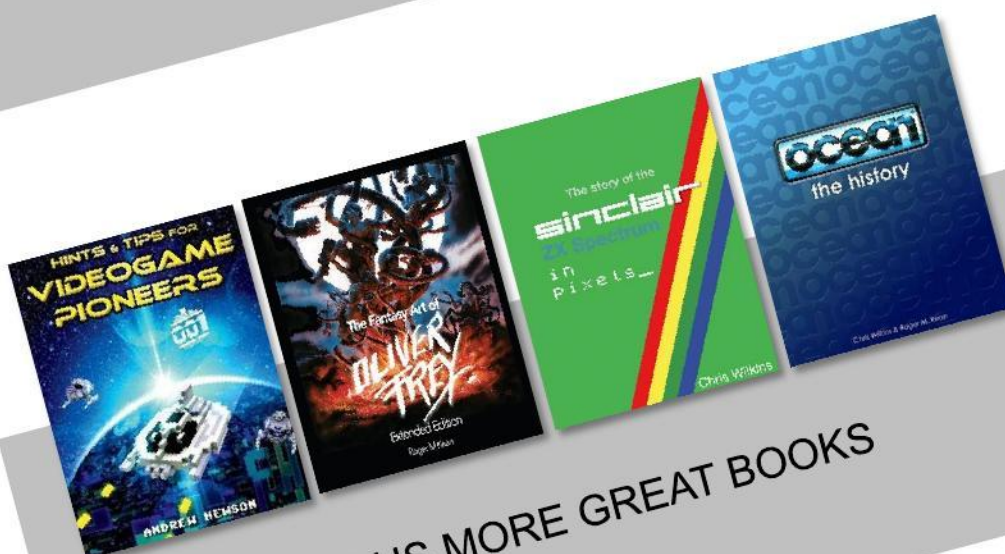
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10 Of The Best Multiplayer Games on the ZX Spectrum

In this current age of Xboxes, PlayStations and the glorious internet, we tend to take multiplayer gaming for granted. Yet back in the day of the ZX Spectrum, games that either pitted you against a fellow human, or had you teaming up with them against the computer were a rarity. But they did exist, and here are ten of the best games for crowding round a Speccy with your mate.

GAUNTLET - US Gold 1987



US Gold didn't have the best reputation with arcade conversions, but it struck, um, gold, with this home port of the Atari smash. While four player support was absent – to be fair, not quite sure how the Spectrum could have managed that – it was still a great game to play with a friend, even if it did frequently end up with arguments about who was to grab the next pile of health-bestowing grub.

What to say: "You need the food mate, you have it"

What not to say: "Fancy a game of Quartet instead?"

See also: Gauntlet II, Druid, Dandy

FORMULA ONE - CRL 1985



Even if you weren't a fan of motor racing, Formula One was a great game to play with a friend or two. Simulating an entire F1 season, it wasn't a complicated game, but succeeded in creating a palpable tension once each race began with its range of options and details on each track. Written by a pair of middle-aged racing fanatics, Formula One was a superb multiplayer game, and the best racing sim on the Speccy by far.

What to say: "Slippery conditions, better change the tyres"

What not to say: "Have you heard my Murray Walker impression?"

See also: Multi-Player Soccer Manager, Grand Prix Manager

BRUCE LEE - US Gold 1985



Bruce Lee was one of the earliest examples of a versus multiplayer game on the Spectrum in combination with its then-unique platform and beat-'em-up fusion. One player took on the eponymous Kung-Fu star with the other assuming the mantel of Yamo, the curious oversized character who must stop Bruce progressing through the twenty chambers. Renowned as one of the easier games on the Spectrum, the multiplayer aspect of Bruce Lee was a neat way of extending the game's life.

What to say: "Let me pick up that lantern, then we can fight"

What not to say: "Hong Kong Phooey was cooler"

See also: Multi-Player Soccer Manager, Grand Prix Manager

WAY OF THE EXPLODING FIST - Melbourne House 1985



The Melbourne House classic was a masterpiece in beat-'em-up purity, with its sharp graphics and well-animated characters performing the powerful and athletic moves simply and quickly. While the controls were a little over-complex, once mastered, Way Of The Exploding Fist became a compulsive test between two karate masters. Ah so!

What to say: "You fight with great honor"

What not to say: "Exploding fist? Bit messy, innit?"

See also: Fist II, International Karate

TWO'S COMPANY : 10 OF THE BEST MULTIPLAYER GAMES ON THE ZX SPECTRUM

Continued....

MATCH DAY II - Ocean Software 1987



The original Match Day revolutionised footie on the Speccy, and for its follow up, author Jon Ritman included a number of improvements that gave the player even greater control and goal-scoring opportunity. As with its predecessor, there was a two-player mode, and you could compete against each other in a league, cup competition, or just a one-off match.

What to say: "It's a game of two halves"

What not to say: "That bright green is doing me 'ead in"

See also: Match Day, Emlyn Hughes International Soccer

TARGET RENEGADE - Imagine/Ocean 1988



When charged with creating an original sequel to an arcade conversion, the Ocean/Imagine team came up with the concept of a co-operative two-player mode, thus elevating the game even beyond its illustrious forebear. Taking on the massed hoodlums of a local crime lord with a friend by your side was never more fun.

What to say: "Time to take out the scum!"

What not to say: "Have you played the arcade game?"

See also: Double Dragon, Final Fight



BMX SIMULATOR - Codemasters 1987



With the official Spectrum conversion of the overhead arcade racer Super Sprint failing to impress, it was left to clones such as this budget game from Codies to satisfy two-player racing fans. Itself converted from a Commodore 64 original, BMX Simulator pitches the brace of bikers against each other around a set of colourful and attractive tracks.

What to say: "Absolutely Brilliant!"

What not to say: "Of course, the Commodore 64 original is better"

See also: BMX Freestyle, BMX Simulator 2

BUBBLE BOBBLE - Firebird 1987



Another arcade conversion, Bubble Bobble, like Gauntlet, was a coin-op game that eschewed fancy graphics in lieu of compelling multiplayer gameplay – which made it perfect for a Spectrum port. Together, two players could battle against Baron Von Blubba and his minions, exploring a Cave Of Monsters that was accurately recreated from the arcades. Lucky 128k owners even got the tune. Sort of.

What to say: "I already have the shoe, you grab it"

What not to say: "You played that Great Giana Sisters? Now there's a cute game"

IKARI WARRIORS - Elite 1988



While it lacked the rotary joystick control of the arcade original, Ikari Warriors was a fantastic conversion from the masters of the genre, Elite Software, and also a great game to play alongside a mate. Essentially a two-player upgrade of Commando, the ability to switch to non-rotating fire helped combat the many enemies the game threw at you, as did the driveable vehicles and grenades.

What to say: "Lay down some cover fire and I'll take out the pill box!"

What not to say: "I can't remember, am I Rambo or Arnie?"

See also: U.C.M., Zybex, Bedlam

CHAOS: BATTLE OF WIZARDS - Games Workshop 1985



Chaos: The Battle Of Wizards – Games Workshop, 1985

Technically speaking turn-based, of course, yet still one of the most compelling and addictive multiplayer experiences on the Spectrum. In Chaos, up to eight players, with any combination of human and computer controlled, battled within a small zone, casting spells both defensive and offensive in an effort to become the last wizard standing.

What to say: "Yea Gods, a golden dragon – better cast a disbelieve spell"

What not to say: "Oi! Get outta my magic wood!"

See also: Rebelstar, Laser Squad

GRUMPY OGRE'S

Adventure Page

Welcome back to strange places where your mind wanders freely and your brain shifts into a higher gear.

This issue I am taking a break.

Do you know how tiring it is having to do all this? Playing games, drinking grog and whinging all the time.. Bahh...

The big news of course, for us adventure fans, is the release of several Magnetic Scrolls games for the Spectrum Next. Not only that, but a few more cracking adventures have also seen the light of day.

Magnetic Scrolls were simply the best adventure company in the UK, and apart from Infocom, probably the World.

They had their debut release in 1985 on the Sinclair QL and The Pawn went on to be converted to numerous other platforms. It won many awards and is a firm favourite with many players.

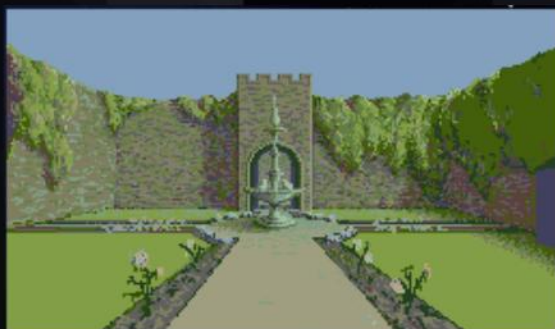
You can even play the very first QL version online too (text only) by visiting the link below.

<https://msmemorial.if-legends.org/games.htm/qlpawn.php>

More games arrived with the likes of Jinxter and Guild Of Thieves proving they were not a one-hit-wonder.

You can of course get Magnetic Scrolls interpreters and play them on your home computer, but the releases for the Spectrum Next make it even more authentic.

Sadly you can't purchase nice boxes that include all the extra bits provided in the originals,



It was always good to read the "What Burglar" magazine that came with Guild Of Thieves. A lot of great humour and background on the game, and it really did make a difference.

The Pawn, Guild Of Thieves and Jinxter are now all available to download free of charge and play on your Spectrum Next, and what's more you can also grab the box contents (albeit in digital form).

Reading the supplement that comes with "What Burglar", it is amazing how good the parser is, as it gives examples of what can be done. How about this;

GET ALL THE BOTTLES THAT ARE ON THE BAR EXCEPT THE GREEN ONE, OPEN THEM AND THROW THE CONTENTS OF THE BOTTLE OF WHISKY AT THE SCAR FACED MAN THEN QUICKLY RUN THROUGH THE DOOR AND HIDE UNDER THE BUSHES.

I enjoyed walking about in the land of Kervonia once again. Un-hindered, it was refreshing to explore the land without being forced into puzzle solving. Many adventures let you see a few locations than lock you down until you solve a puzzle.

It was also great to see the location graphics again, looking as dazzling as they did when I first saw them.

The other games released are also very impressive, being authored by the online tool Adventuron, and compiled

ON THE PATH

8/8

The Pawn - Copyright (c) 1985 Magnetic Scrolls Ltd.
Version 1.0
You wake up on a sunny August morning with birds singing, and the air fresh and clear. However, your joints are stiff and you have not woken up in your bedroom as you would have expected. Trying to recall what happened the night before, you manage to piece together a few brief glimpses to give the following account:
You were walking home, having just done your week's shopping at the supermarket, when you noticed a stranger in a white overcoat coming towards you. When he got very close you noticed that he was wearing glasses and had a thick, bushy beard. As he passed you he let out a hollow, cackling laugh and you felt a sharp blow on the back of your head. Then you woke up.
You now notice that you are wearing a silver

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BILLIARD ROOM



In this part of the corridor the wooden tiles form a mosaic of a huge cello, laden with far-away lands. The corridor runs east-west and there is also an entrance to a room in the north.
> n
Billiard Room
This is a large room with dim lighting, dominated by a billiard table that is kept in superb condition. Blackboard are on the west wall and there are exits in the south and east walls.
> _

When graphics were added to the 16bit versions, it took the game to a whole new level.

The parsers were exquisite and the games were enthralling and challenging. It never seemed you were playing 'guess the word' with these games and there was always a witty response waiting to surprise you.

using the DADD engine.

The Curse of Rabenstein is an interactive horror adventure featuring some really nice graphics.

The game eases you in, allowing you to explore the area and locations, discov-

Druid. Another fine graphic adventure that gives you freedom to explore.

Again, I would like to spend more time with all of these great games and it is fantastic that titles of this quality are being released.

tive and create new worlds to explore.

I know I keep saying this, but I wish I had more time to try these out and release more games in the adventure format myself.

It is a genre that I like and...

Ohhh blast..

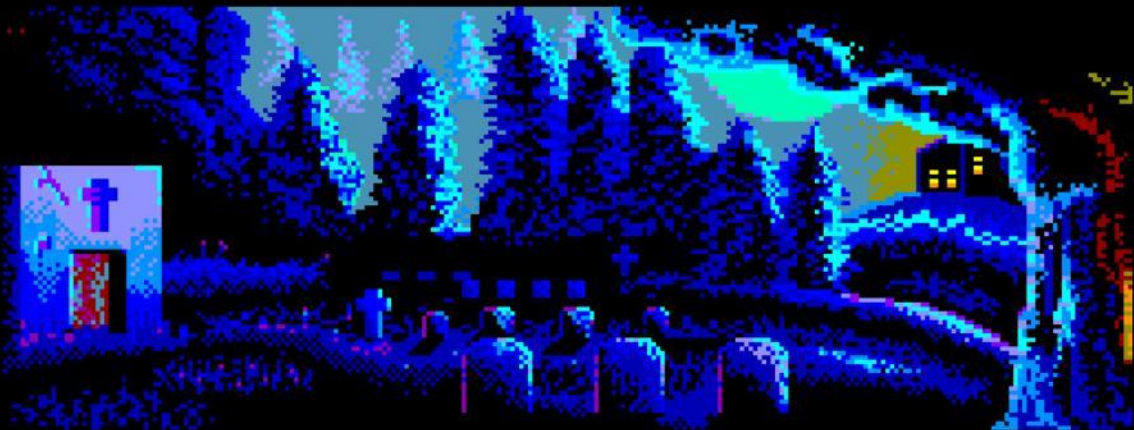
I said I was taking a break this issue, and here I am spouting words about adventures and the like.

Now there's a thought...

The thing that is missing in this new digital age is the adventure help lines that could be found in so many magazines.

Avidly read by adventurers hoping to get tips on the game they were playing, willing the writer to mention the puzzle they were stuck on... ahh happy memories.

Today of course, we have the internet. A less formal, more instant form of gratification. Gone are the rambling of men who spend far too much time in dimly lit rooms.



Graveyard Turns: 16
The graveyard is a little remote and in the immediate vicinity of the forest. On a hill in the distance you can see an old manor. The graves look well kept. A little bit off the beaten track is a mausoleum. From here you can only go south.
You notice: a mausoleum.
...

er objects and interact with characters.

The game uses an interesting mechanic in that EXAMINE and SEARCH are treated differently. Examining hay for example may produce the reply "it's wet and smells.", however, searching the hay would produce "you search the hay and find a key."

This different provide a useful method to get you thinking more. If you examine something you may find out about how it can be used, but searching it may reveal something hidden within.

The narrative moves along at a nice pace, and I am hoping to get some time to play this more than I have.

The other released

The last two games can also be run on normal Spectrums (+3) so there is plenty of opportunity to get to grips with them.

Elsewhere in this issue you will find an article on Adventuron, a great tool for creating excellent games. Just take a look at Rite of the Druid for an example of what it can do.

This will be a great tool for budding or experienced adventure writers to get produc-



You are on a beach at the edge of the forest which spreads up a steep incline to the north. The sea gently laps the shore and the sand, covered with large chunks of driftwood, is fine and soft under your feet.

Exits: N

>



h exotic goods from
h the north wall.

rb condition. A cue rack and

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THE SPECTRUM

MAGAZINE

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- **Articles**

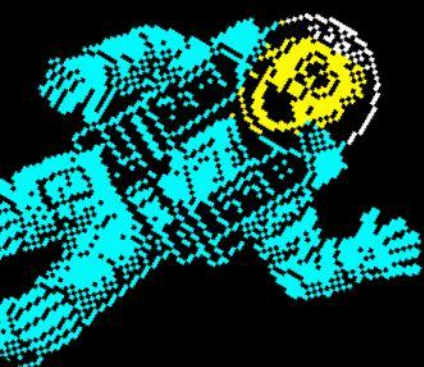
Short pieces about your time with the Spectrum, tips, guides or comments.

- **Features**

Longer pieces about specific hardware, software, technical, companies etc.

- **Reviews**

Game reviews wanted!



See inside front cover for contact details

